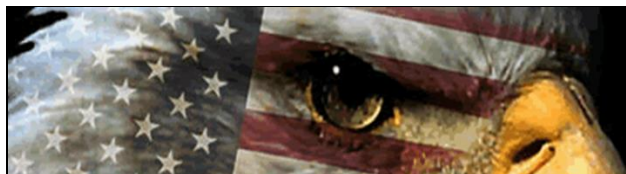



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## Events, Opportunities

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HEADLINE	08/23 Salaries: King County for 2021
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/databases/article252286068.html">https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/databases/article252286068.html</a>
GIST	<p>This database shows base salary and total compensation for King County government employees for 2021. Data was provided by the county, responding to a public records request from The News Tribune.</p> <p>SEARCH TIPS: Search by name, department or title. Sort by clicking on header row.</p>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	<a href="#">Click on source link for interactive search</a>

HEADLINE	08/26 Ukraine pokes the Russian bear
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/26/world/europe/ukraine-russia-taunting.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/26/world/europe/ukraine-russia-taunting.html</a>

KYIV, Ukraine — It was pure performance art, pointedly aimed at irking the Kremlin: a mock parade staged by Ukraine featuring dozens of captured Russian tanks in Kyiv's central avenue.

More substantively, Ukraine has delivered strikes into the heart of Russian strongholds once considered untouchable, including an explosion at a base in Crimea that destroyed eight warplanes.

And lest their actions go unnoticed, the Ukrainian government's social media sites went into high gear after these and other episodes, posting a flurry of taunting one-liners that mocked its adversary.

"An unsuccessful attempt to launch Russian tankers into space," read one post accompanying a video showing a Russian tank blowing up, the turret soaring into the sky. It was posted on the official Facebook site of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

In ways big and small, Ukraine's leadership is goading its much more powerful antagonist, driven by deep anger at Russia, a newfound confidence after battlefield victories, the need to rally support at home and abroad, and a large dose of psychological warfare intended to unnerve the enemy.

In doing so, it is upending the longstanding diplomatic maxim about the need to tread carefully in dealings with the Kremlin.

"There is an axiomatic policy — don't poke the bear — that's been around for decades," said Cliff Kupchan, chairman of the Eurasia Group, a political risk assessment firm in Washington. "The Ukrainians are turning that policy on its head. And the bear has proven remarkably pokable."

"The question is, how much is too much, and is there too much?" Mr. Kupchan said. "It's obviously not a question we want to get answered."

If Ukraine's mockery seems uniquely sophisticated, it reflects the finely tuned sensibility for publicity of its president, Volodymyr Zelensky, a former comedic actor, and his top advisers, many of whom joined the government after careers in the news media, show business and comedy.

Russia has already devastated much of eastern and southern Ukraine — razing cities, killing civilians, inflicting atrocities. Russia could still inflict further damage — to infrastructure like the power grid, for example — and its proxies in eastern Ukraine have signaled an intention to stage show trials of Ukrainian prisoners of war, possibly leading to death sentences.

Still, Ukrainians appear to believe that Moscow has already done so much damage that its options for further retribution are limited.

"Everything that could happen already happened," said Serhiy Leshchenko, an adviser to the presidential chief of staff.

Ukraine, for instance, has overtly crossed Russian red lines in Crimea; the Kremlin had repeatedly warned that strikes on the peninsula, which was illegally annexed by Russia in 2014, would be viewed as an attack on Russian territory. But the Ukrainian strikes there have so far drawn only a baseline response of Russian long-range fire.

One factor, Mr. Leshchenko said, is that Russia has already been stretched to the limits of its military capabilities, limiting its ability for reprisal.

To be sure, the benefits of poking at President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia are limited. It has not resulted in significant Ukrainian gains on the battlefield, where Russia wields superior numbers and weaponry. And it has not eroded Moscow's grim determination to push ahead with a war of attrition, which Mr. Putin signaled again on Thursday with the announcement that Russia would sharply increase the size of its armed forces.

But the Ukrainian approach appears to serve several aims. It is, in part, calculated to embolden Western donors of military aid, who have been carefully calibrating contributions to avoid provoking Russia into an escalation.

Ridiculing the enemy also provides a feel-good act of defiance, intended to enhance national unity and bolster the morale of Ukrainians beleaguered by six months of war.

The Ukrainian military hit targets inside Russian territory just over a month after the invasion. The strike, a nighttime helicopter assault on a fuel depot near the city of Belgorod, became the first air attack on Russia since World War II. It was a brazen maneuver, and Russia did not retaliate in any specific manner.

The Ukrainian government has not formally acknowledged strikes inside Russia, maintaining a policy of ambiguity on the issue. But it used the Belgorod strike to tweak its adversary, saying that Russians shouldn't smoke cigarettes near a fuel site.

The more intense flurry of strikes at targets in Russia near the Ukrainian border, and on the Russian-occupied peninsula of Crimea, began last month. It was part of a shift in strategy as Ukraine pivoted to targeting Russian logistical networks deep in the rear of the battlefield, rather than striving for gains in head-to-head fighting on the frontline.

Along with disrupting supply lines, the tactic provided a psychological component: In the Ukrainian view, it signaled to Russians that territory they considered protected was not, in fact, safe. And by bringing the war home to Russia, they hoped to elevate political pressure on the government of Mr. Putin.

In the process, Ukrainians brushed off threats from the Kremlin. After the strikes on Crimea began, Dmitri A. Medvedev, the former Russian president and deputy chairman of the Russian Security Council, said of the strikes and taunts, "doomsday will come immediately for all of them, very fast and heavy" if these actions did not cease.

The Ukrainian strikes continued apace. Two munitions dumps near Belgorod exploded within days of Mr. Medvedev's warning. The governor of the Belgorod region, Vyacheslav Gladkov, blamed the summer heat and sunlight for warming the explosives and sparking fire.

Ukraine's Ministry of Defense ridiculed that explanation.

"Another detonation of ammo 'due to the heat' in the Belgorod region in Russia," the ministry wrote on Twitter. "In a few months we will find out whether Russian ammo can explode because of the cold. The five main causes of sudden explosion are: winter, spring, summer, autumn and smoking."

After a drone strike on the headquarters of Russia's Black Sea Fleet in the Crimean port of Sevastopol, Ukrainian officials refrained from any formal claim of responsibility. But Mr. Zelensky noted slyly in his evening video address that "one can literally feel in the air of Crimea that the occupation there is temporary."

Early in his tenure, Mr. Zelensky had strictly prohibited any aggravating rhetoric directed at Russia, seeking to avoid needlessly elevating tensions.

Still, his team has turned to driving home Russia's vulnerability while appealing to Western governments for more and more lethal weaponry.

The display in central Kyiv last weekend was perhaps Ukraine's most public and brazen act of mockery. Collected from battlefields in the east and south of the country, the burned tanks and armored vehicles were placed on a broad thoroughfare that leads to Independence Square, the site of the pro-Western uprising in 2014.

The display lampooned what Ukrainian officials say were Russian plans to hold a victory parade had they captured the capital early in the invasion — plans that ended in a humiliating retreat.

Mr. Zelensky's office declined to discuss internal deliberations about the parade of wrecked tanks, including any risk-benefit analysis. In written answers to questions, a senior adviser, Kyrylo Tymoshenko, responded with another zinger aimed at the Russians.

"Now the world can see the Russians who wanted to march in a victory parade through this street," he wrote. "They have marched."

As old as warfare, taunting the enemy has been an element of many conflicts, including the United States' wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Ukrainians have refined the art.

The Ministry of Defense recently posted a doctored video of a High Mobility Rocket Artillery System — the American-provided, precision rocket system believed to be responsible for many strikes behind enemy lines — bobbing ridiculously in the waves of the Black Sea on a pink air mattress. In front of the chunky, truck-mounted rocket launcher was the Kerch Strait bridge, a symbol of Mr. Putin's claim to the Crimean Peninsula. The message was clear: The bridge is, or soon will be, within range.

The government has not been above some self-deprecating humor, too.

On Wednesday, Independence Day in Ukraine, the ministry poked fun at its own penchant for mockery.

"We will not write anything pompous today," the ministry said. "We will simply say one thing: This is a nation that deserves victory. Happy Independence Day, Ukraine!"

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HEADLINE	<b>08/25 NYC housing bussed migrants in 14 hotels</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://nypost.com/2022/08/25/nyc-now-using-14-hotels-to-house-migrants-amid-ongoing-surge/">https://nypost.com/2022/08/25/nyc-now-using-14-hotels-to-house-migrants-amid-ongoing-surge/</a>
GIST	<p>The ongoing <a href="#">surge of migrants</a> to the Big Apple has forced the city to strike emergency deals with 14 hotels because the shelter system is overloaded amid President Biden's border crisis.</p> <p>Immigrant Affairs Commissioner Manuel Castro revealed the eye-popping total during a news conference at the Port Authority Bus Terminal in Manhattan, where five buses arrived Thursday carrying migrants relocated by Texas Gov. Greg Abbott — matching Wednesday's record number of buses.</p> <p>City Hall pressed the 14th hotel into service on Thursday, <a href="#">up from 11</a> about two weeks ago, an official familiar with the matter told The Post.</p> <p>In another stunning acknowledgment of the city's inability to deal with the situation, Castro said Mayor Eric Adams and Gov. Kathy Hochul have appealed to officials in other states for help housing migrants.</p> <p>"Unlike Gov. Abbott, our mayor and our governor are showing true leadership by actively coordinating with the White House and federal government and governors across the country and mayors across the country to see how we can work together to address the need to resettle asylum-seekers," he said.</p> <p>Castro didn't identify any of the city and state leaders who've been contacted and neither City Hall nor Hochul's office responded immediately to requests for comment.</p> <p>But a source with knowledge of Adams' efforts said he'd reached out to the United States Conference of Mayors for assistance.</p> <p>Since May, more than 6,000 migrants have <a href="#">sought shelter from the city</a>, including at least 750 on the buses Abbott said he began <a href="#">sending here earlier this month</a>, officials have said.</p>

Abbott's move came after he [started relocating migrants](#) to Washington, DC, in April to protest what he calls President Biden's "irresponsible open border policies" and their impact on the Lone Star State.

On Wednesday, workers on one bus were seen scanning barcodes on bracelets worn by the migrants and then cutting them off their wrists as they disembarked, leading city officials to question the purpose.

An Abbott spokesperson on Thursday called the bracelets "standard protocol for voluntary transport by the Texas Division of Emergency Management" and said they've "been used during times of natural disasters like hurricanes when needing to transport people to safety."

"This process also helps ensure we are only transporting migrants who have been processed and released by the federal government with federal documentation that allows them to move about the country," press secretary Renae Eze said.

The number of migrants stopped while entering the US from Mexico is on pace to reach a record 2 million-plus by the end of the federal fiscal year on Sept. 30.

City Hall has refused to say how much is being spent housing migrants in hotels but a Post analysis this week found the annual cost [could top \\$300 million](#), based on the average \$148 daily room rate it paid under terms of a \$139 million contract last year.

Last week, the city said it was seeking to [rent 5,000 rooms](#). On Thursday, City Hall confirmed that it was no longer planning to [house some 600 families at the Row NYC hotel](#) near Times Square.

Thursday's buses carried 223 migrants, according to the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs.

The passengers included several women carrying infants swaddled in blankets and a heavyset man who had to be helped off a bus and into a bright-yellow wheelchair by an FDNY paramedic.

It was unclear what was ailing the man, who was wearing a cardboard crown but no shoes.

He told a reporter he was from Colombia and gave a thumbs-up sign before being wheeled away.

The man was followed off the bus by a little girl with a long braid who carried a pillow and a stuffed animal, and who appeared to be the youngest of several siblings, including a tall, teenage boy.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/26 Turkey, Finland, Sweden officials meet</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.reuters.com/world/turkey-finland-sweden-officials-meet-discuss-turkish-concerns-2022-08-26/">https://www.reuters.com/world/turkey-finland-sweden-officials-meet-discuss-turkish-concerns-2022-08-26/</a>
GIST	<p>HELSINKI, Aug 26 (Reuters) - Officials from Turkey, Finland and Sweden were expected to meet at an undisclosed location in Finland on Friday to discuss security concerns which Turkey raised as a precondition for allowing the two Nordic countries to join the NATO military alliance.</p> <p>Finland's Foreign Minister Pekka Haavisto said earlier the first meeting between officials would aim to establish contacts and set goals for cooperation that the three countries agreed to by signing a memorandum of understanding at NATO's Madrid summit at the end of June.</p> <p>The two Nordic countries applied for NATO membership in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, but were faced with opposition from Turkey which accused them of imposing arms embargoes on Ankara and supporting groups it deems terrorists.</p> <p>Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu has demanded Sweden and Finland extradite suspects Turkey seeks over terrorism-related charges while the Nordic countries argue they did not agree to any specific extraditions by signing the memorandum.</p>

	<p>Finland's foreign ministry remained tight-lipped about Friday's meeting, refusing to reveal its location or even timing.</p> <p>"This is a matter of security. If we would tell where Turkey's high officials are at which time, it would give quite a careless picture of us," Haavisto's state secretary Jukka Salovaara told Finland's public broadcaster YLE.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/26 Europeans price shocked by energy crisis</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.reuters.com/markets/europe/forget-showering-its-eat-or-heat-shocked-europeans-hit-by-energy-crisis-2022-08-26/">https://www.reuters.com/markets/europe/forget-showering-its-eat-or-heat-shocked-europeans-hit-by-energy-crisis-2022-08-26/</a>
GIST	<p>LONDON, Aug 26 (Reuters) - No more ironing, limited oven use and showering at work – Europeans are trying to keep their energy use down but the bills keep climbing.</p> <p>As wholesale gas and electricity prices surge, millions of people in Europe are now spending a record amount of their income on energy, data show.</p> <p>In the east England town of Grimsby, Philip Keetley didn't turn on his cooling fan at home as Britain sweltered under a record heat-wave this summer.</p> <p>A look at his bank account showed he couldn't afford to.</p> <p>"The cost of living has increased and yet you're still expected to live on the money provided for when there wasn't a crisis ... I either can have my heating on or eat," Keetley said.</p> <p>Citizens in other European countries too are voluntarily taking action to cut consumption as gas, electricity and fuel prices sky-rocket due to war in Ukraine, sanctions on Russia and the aftermath of the coronavirus pandemic.</p> <p>The benchmark European gas price has soared 550% in the past 12 months. The cost of energy for British consumers will rise by 80% from October, regulator Ofgem said on Friday, taking average annual household bills to 3,549 pounds (\$4,188).</p> <p>European governments have rushed to offer aid, but data shows the assistance hasn't made a significant difference to households.</p> <p>This winter, Britons will spend an average 10% of their household income on gas, electricity and other heating fuels as well as domestic vehicle fuels, mainly petrol and diesel, twice the amount in 2021, according to Carbon Brief's calculations of official data.</p> <p>This makes the current energy crisis more severe than those of the 1970s and 1980s. An oil producer's oil embargo and the Iranian revolution in 1979 caused blackouts and long queues in petrol stations in the West. At the peak of that crisis in 1982, people in the UK paid 9.3% of their income on energy.</p> <p>UK charity National Energy Action (NEA) estimates 8.5 million UK households could be in fuel poverty after October when Britain's cap increases, up from 4.5 million last October.</p> <p>A household is defined as living in fuel poverty if it is low income and needs to spend 10% or more of its income on energy, according to NEA and other British charities. The definition is unofficially used in other European countries.</p> <p>"The increase in energy bills that we're seeing is completely unprecedented," said Peter Smith, director of policy and advocacy at NEA.</p>

"We think that those historical trends of low income households disproportionately spending more of their income on energy is still very evident."

#### EAT OR HEAT

Keetley lost his job as a council adviser in April and lives on 600 pounds (\$706.44) a month from a social security scheme. Half of that goes on rent, he said, with the remainder barely covering essentials.

He now eats one meal a day and despite reducing energy consumption to a minimum, he spends more than 15% of his income on energy bills.

A third of UK households have reduced cooker and oven use, a study by the Financial Fairness Trust showed, a third have reduced the number of showers they take, and half have turned down the temperature in their homes.

"People are doing a lot to try to keep their bills down but they are going up anyway. That's why we want to see more action from government," said Jamie Evans, senior research associate at Bristol University who was involved in the Financial Fairness Trust's study.

Dawn White, who has renal failure, says she fears Britain's spiralling energy costs mean she will no longer be able to afford her life-saving treatment.

"Without my (dialysis) machine five times a week, 20 hours, I will die," 59-year-old White, who lives in southeast England, told Reuters.

Gas prices for families in most leading European economies in early 2022 exceeded the peak of previous crises in the 1970s, 1980s and 2000s, according to an inflation-adjusted index for households provided by the International Energy Agency (IEA).

Europe looks worse off than other developed economies.

By the end of the first quarter, the OECD gas price index was still lower than the peak of previous crises.

IEA data dating back to 1978 shows that although American households paid on average higher prices for natural gas in the last four decades, the price of gas for European families has exceeded American levels in 2022.

#### SHOWER AT WORK

In Turkey, gas prices more than doubled in July from a year earlier, while electricity prices surged 67% year-on-year, according to Turkish Statistical Institute data.

Şeyda Bal, 27, in Istanbul, said she has limited oven use to three times a month to save on energy. Her husband commutes to work via bus to save on fuel, although it takes him three times longer.

In the European Union, Italian and German families are among the worst hit by surging gas prices, IEA data shows.

Energy bills in an average Italian family, mainly for gas and electricity, jumped to 5% of total household expenses by July 2022, from 3.5% in 2019, data from economic research firm Prometeia showed. The July level was the highest since 1995 based on OECD data.

In Europe's biggest economy, Germany, household gas bills more than doubled in July from 2021, data from prices portal Check24 showed, while heating oil prices for families with a mid-terrace house were up 78% year-on-year in May.



	Ercan Erden, 58, lives in the town of Nidda, northeast of Frankfurt, and works as a machine operator at a mineral water factory. "I now take my shower at the workplace after work, and I shave at work," he said.
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HEADLINE	<b>08/25 Russian goods still flowing to US</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-putin-biden-baltimore-only-on-ap-81a34ce2eecebe491f52ace380ce87fb">https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-putin-biden-baltimore-only-on-ap-81a34ce2eecebe491f52ace380ce87fb</a>
GIST	<p>BALTIMORE (AP) — On a hot, humid East Coast day this summer, a massive container ship pulled into the Port of Baltimore loaded with sheets of plywood, aluminum rods and radioactive material – all sourced from the fields, forests and factories of Russia.</p> <p>President Joe Biden promised to “inflict pain” and deal “a crushing blow” on Vladimir Putin through trade restrictions on commodities like vodka, diamonds and gasoline in the wake of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine six months ago. But hundreds of other types of unsanctioned goods worth billions of dollars, including those found on the ship bound for Baltimore from St. Petersburg, Russia, continue to flow into U.S. ports.</p> <p>The Associated Press found more than 3,600 shipments of wood, metals, rubber and other goods have arrived at U.S. ports from Russia since it began launching missiles and airstrikes into its neighbor in February. That’s a significant drop from the same period in 2021 when about 6,000 shipments arrived, but it still adds up to more than \$1 billion worth of commerce a month.</p> <p>In reality, no one involved actually expected trade to drag to a halt after the invasion. Banning imports of certain items would likely do more harm to those sectors in the U.S. than in Russia.</p> <p>“When we impose sanctions, it could disrupt global trade. So our job is to think about which sanctions deliver the most impact while also allowing global trade to work,” Ambassador Jim O’Brien, who heads the State Department’s Office of Sanctions Coordination, told the AP.</p> <p>Experts say the global economy is so intertwined that sanctions must be limited in scope to avoid driving up prices in an already unstable market.</p> <p>Also, U.S. sanctions don’t exist in a vacuum; layers of European Union and U.K bans result in convoluted trade rules that can be confusing to buyers, sellers and policymakers.</p> <p>For example, the Biden administration and the EU released separate lists of Russian companies that cannot receive exports, but at least one of those companies — which supplies the Russian military with metal to make fighter jets currently dropping bombs in Ukraine — is still selling millions of dollars of metal to American and European firms, AP found.</p> <p>While some U.S. importers are sourcing alternative materials elsewhere, others say they have no choice. In the case of wood imports, Russia’s dense birch forests create such hard, strong timber that most American wooden classroom furniture, and much home flooring, is made from it. Shipping containers of Russian items — groats, weightlifting shoes, crypto mining gear, even pillows — arrive at U.S. ports almost every day.</p> <p>A breakdown of imported goods from Russia shows some items are clearly legal and even encouraged by the Biden administration, like the more than 100 shipments of fertilizer that have arrived since the invasion. Now-banned products like Russian oil and gas continued to arrive in U.S. ports long after the announcement of sanctions due to “wind down” periods, allowing companies to complete existing contracts.</p> <p>In some cases, the origin of products shipped out of Russian ports can be difficult to discern. U.S. energy companies are continuing to import oil from Kazakhstan through Russian ports, even though that oil is</p>



sometimes mixed with Russian fuel. Trade experts warn that Russian suppliers are unreliable, and opaque corporate structures of most major Russian companies make it difficult to determine whether they have ties to the government.

“It is a general rule: when you have sanctions, you’ll have all kinds of murky schemes and illicit trade,” said Russian economist Konstantin Sonin, who teaches at the University of Chicago. “Still, sanctions make sense because even though you cannot kill 100% of revenues, you can reduce them.”

Many American companies are choosing to cut off Russian trade. Coors beer, for example, returned a shipment of hops to a state-owned Russian company in May as part of a commitment to suspend all business in the country, said Molson Coors Beverage Co. spokeswoman Jennifer Martinez.

Russia and the U.S. were never major trading partners, and so sanctioning imports is only a very small slice of the retaliatory strategy. Restrictions on exports from the U.S. — of technology in particular — cause more damage to the Russian economy, and sanctioning the Russian Central Bank has frozen Russia’s access to roughly \$600 billion in currency reserves held across the U.S. and Europe.

Nonetheless, sanctions carry a symbolic weight beyond the financial harm they might inflict, particularly for American consumers horrified by the war.

Here’s a look at some of the goods that have flowed between the two countries:

## METALS

Russia is a key exporter of metals like aluminum, steel and titanium; cutting off that trade could dramatically drive up prices for Americans already grappling with inflation, said Morgan Stanley economist Jacob Nell.

“The basic idea with sanctions is that you’re trying to act in a way that causes more pain to the other side and less pain to yourself,” he said.

Most American companies dealing in metals have longstanding relationships with Russian suppliers. Such trade, particularly of aluminum, has continued virtually uninterrupted since the beginning of the war.

AP found more than 900 shipments totaling more than 264 million tons of metals since February. Russia is one of the largest producers of unwrought aluminum outside of China and a significant global exporter. But the war has affected that global market as well.

“Like all manufacturers,” said Aluminum Association spokesperson Matt Meenan, “we have seen supply chain impacts in terms of increased energy costs and other inflationary pressures which the invasion exacerbated.”

Russian aluminum ends up in American car parts and airplanes, soda cans and cables, ladders and solar racks. The largest U.S. buyer at the start of 2022 was a subsidiary of Russian-owned global aluminum giant Rusal. In April, Rusal America’s senior executives bought the U.S.-based part of the company and rebranded it as PerenniAL. In July alone, PerenniAL imported more than 35,000 tons from Russia. The company did not respond to requests for comment.

Also, among the private companies choosing to source materials from Russia are U.S. government contractors supported by federal tax dollars. Boeing, the world’s largest aerospace company signed a federal contract for up to \$23.8 billion in 2021; it imported 20 tons of aluminum in June from Kamensk-Uralsky Metallurgical Works. In March, the U.S. banned exports to Kamensk-Uralsky because it supplies metals to the Russian military, but placed no restrictions on imports. A Boeing representative said the company made the decision to end trade with Russia in March, and explained that the shipment that arrived in June had been purchased four months before.

Another metal importer, Tirus US, is owned by Russian company VSMPO-AVISMA, the world's largest titanium producer. VSMPO also provides metal to the Russian military to build fighter jets. The company's broad global footprint and specific product — titanium — underscores the challenges of isolating Russia from global trade. Tirus US sells titanium to more than 300 companies in 48 countries, including a range of U.S. buyers, from jewelry makers to aerospace companies.

The company said only that due to significant challenges in the U.S., it has been working with several American companies to alleviate supply chain issues.

## WOOD

Russia's vast forests are some of the largest in the world. After Canada, Russia is the second largest exporter of wood, and has some of the only mills that can make strong, solid Baltic birch plywood, flooring used throughout the U.S.

This year, the Biden administration began imposing tariffs on Russian wood exports, a move which infuriated Ronald Liberatori, a Nevada-based wood dealer who sells Russian grown Baltic birch to all the major furniture makers, construction companies and flooring manufacturers in the U.S.

"The problem here is Russia is the only country in the world that makes this product," he said. "There's no alternative source."

He said that on top of the tariff, he had to put up an \$800,000 bond to ensure he'd pay the tax, further driving up prices.

"Who's paying for this? Who? You and every other individual in the United States," he said. "We're so damned upset with what Biden has done. This is a government versus government issue."

Liberatori said decision-makers need to consider who is going to be more hurt by tariffs before imposing them.

Another wood and paper importer told AP that while it stopped any new orders in February, it had vast amounts of lumber in Russia that already had been paid for; the final shipment arrived in the U.S. in July.

## FUEL

On March 8, Biden announced the United States is banning all imports of Russian oil, gas and energy, "targeting the main artery of Russia's economy."

"That means Russian oil will no longer be acceptable at U.S. ports, and the American people will deal another powerful blow to Putin's war machine," he said.

Within hours, there were reports that a ship carrying 1 million barrels of Russian oil to the U.S. changed course to France. But plenty of others pushed on.

That week, about a million barrels of Russian crude oil had arrived off the port of Philadelphia, bound for Delta Airlines' oil refinery Monroe Energy. Meanwhile, a tanker with about 75,000 barrels of Russian tar oil pulled into the port of Texas City, Texas, bound for Valero's refineries after a long north Atlantic crossing, according to trade records.

The shipments continued to Valero, ExxonMobil and others. ExxonMobil media manager Julie King told AP a July oil delivery was of Kazakh origin and not subject to sanctions. She said Exxon "supports the internationally coordinated efforts to bring Russia's unprovoked attack to an end, and are complying with all sanctions."

Monroe spokesman Adam Gattuso said the company has not received any more Russian fuel and doesn't "anticipate doing so for the foreseeable future." Valero did not respond to requests for comment.

Andrea Schlaepfer, a spokesperson for Dutch fuel exporter Vitol, said that all of its oil and gas shipments since April 22 have been from Kazakhstan, where pipelines and rail networks run from the landlocked country's oil fields and refineries to neighboring Russian ports.

For the use of its port infrastructure, moorings and fees, Russia makes about \$10 million each year.

Schlaepfer said U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents review and verify that its shipments entering the U.S. don't contain Russian products. But CBP did not answer repeated questions about how it handles sanctions and bans on Russian goods. A CBP fact sheet says it plays a "critical role" in enforcing prohibitions on imports, however a spokesman repeatedly referred The AP to the State and Treasury departments.

## OTHER

So far this year, almost 4,000 tons of Russian bullets have also arrived in the U.S., where they were distributed to gun shops and ammo dealers. Some were sold to U.S. buyers by Russian state-owned companies, while others came from at least one sanctioned oligarch. Those shipments slowed significantly after April.

AP also tracked millions of dollars worth of shipments of radioactive uranium hexafluoride from Russian state-owned Tenex JSC, the world's largest exporter of initial nuclear fuel cycle products, to Westinghouse Electric Co. in South Carolina. Nuclear material is not sanctioned.

Westinghouse spokeswoman Cathy Mann said that as part of the nuclear fuel manufacturing process, their fuel fabrication facilities receive enriched uranium product and convert it into fuel pellets. She said Westinghouse doesn't own the uranium used to make fuel. That material belongs to customers who operate nuclear power plants throughout the world.

"As a result, our customers have the accountability to determine where and from whom the materials are procured – some of which is sourced from Russia or enriched by a Russian company," she said. "Westinghouse condemns Russia's invasion and the resulting hostility and loss of life."

In addition, some of the products sent to the U.S. from Russian ports continue on to Mexico and Canada. Toyota vehicle components, for example, arrived last month in New Orleans bound for a Mexican plant run by Toyota Tshusho, the car company's trading arm.

Radioactive material sent from Russia to the U.S. is hauled north of the border to sterilize packaged medical supplies used throughout North America.

Although imports of some food items, such as seafood and vodka, have been restricted, the Treasury Department last month published a fact sheet reiterating that agricultural trade between the U.S. and Russia is still very much allowed.

The Red October chocolate factory sits just across from the Kremlin in Moscow. Today it's a tourist attraction with apartments, stores and restaurants. But the company, Krasny Oktyabr, still makes and sells candy and other traditional treats from a production plant on the outskirts of Russia.

In Brooklyn, New York, Grigoriy Katsura, at the U.S. offices of Krasnyi Oktyabr Inc, said they continue to import delectables, a taste of childhood for Russian immigrants.

"Of course they're used to it," he said.

	And so every few weeks, the shipments arrive at their warehouse from Russia: buckwheat, dried fruit and their world-renowned chocolate.
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HEADLINE	<b>08/25 German, French power prices hit highs</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://ca.news.yahoo.com/german-french-power-prices-hit-085519359.html">https://ca.news.yahoo.com/german-french-power-prices-hit-085519359.html</a>
GIST	<p>(Bloomberg) -- The cost of French power jumped to a fresh record as its nuclear fleet faces further outages going into what's set to be a very expensive winter.</p> <p>Futures soared 15% to 900 euros per megawatt-hour -- more than 10 times the price at this time last year.</p> <p>The surge is being driven by Electricite de France SA's announcement that more of its reactors will take longer to come back online after halts. The outages affect plants with a combined capacity of 8,380 megawatts -- almost 14% of France's total nuclear capacity.</p> <p>Europe is in the grip of an energy crisis amid tighter hydropower supplies and natural gas cuts from Russia, which are pushing up the price of the fuel used in the continent's power stations. Supplies are set to drop further from Aug. 31, when Russia's Gazprom PJSC plans to shut the Nord Stream pipeline to Germany for three days of maintenance, triggering fears that shipments may not resume.</p> <p>In France, six reactor outages have been extended since Wednesday afternoon, as well as a new one announced at the Paluel 4 reactor for four days. Some of the shutdowns are just for a few days, while others have been extended by as many as two months.</p> <p>Embattled state-run Electricite de France SA is facing full nationalization as part of the government's plans to get the country's power system back on its feet. France normally exports power to its neighbors like the UK and Germany for most of the year, but the reverse is expected in 2022, and it may need to import electricity during long periods this winter -- if its neighbors have the capacity to provide it.</p> <p>Power for France's winter is also getting particularly expensive. Baseload power for November gained 9.2% to 1,660 euros, with peak-load energy-- for periods of high demand -- trading at 2,881 euros.</p> <p>Pressure is mounting on European leaders to ease the pain facing their citizens. On Friday, the UK regulator is set to announce an increase in household bills to a level about three times last winter's, further stretching consumer budgets and raising the prospect of a recession.</p> <p>In Germany, Europe's largest market, power prices for next year soared as much as 23% to an all-time high of 792 euros a megawatt-hour.</p> <p>Day-ahead prices also rose to records across Europe, including in Germany, France and the UK. The highest was in Italy, where electricity for Friday jumped 17% to a record 718.71 euros per megawatt hour, according to data from Gestore dei Mercati Energetici SpA.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/25 Monkeypox antiviral effective?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/monkeypox-antiviral-originated-as-post-9-11-bioterrorism-defense-11661400471?mod=latest_headlines">https://www.wsj.com/articles/monkeypox-antiviral-originated-as-post-9-11-bioterrorism-defense-11661400471?mod=latest_headlines</a>
GIST	<p>In the aftermath of 9/11, <a href="#">SIGA Technologies</a> Inc. started work on a drug it hoped would never be used. Now, Tpoxx is playing a surprising role as one of the few available treatments thought to be effective against monkeypox.</p> <p>SIGA's employees spent nearly two decades developing Tpoxx to treat smallpox in case of a bioterrorism attack. <a href="#">Monkeypox is a related virus</a> that is mainly infecting men in the U.S. and other countries who have sex with men.</p>

Like [Bavarian Nordic](#) AS, the [only maker of a vaccine](#) licensed for monkeypox, SIGA is largely alone on one front of the response to an epidemic that has caused more than 13,500 cases in the U.S.

The company said it is juggling calls from governments around the world, leading to \$60 million in Tpoxx orders from places including Europe and Canada. SIGA's market value has more than doubled this year to \$1.54 billion. SIGA Chief Executive Officer Phil Gomez compared the experience to being a reserve player on a team that has made it to the championships.

"All of a sudden you have to be ready to get on the court," he said.

U.S. officials have made Tpoxx available for seriously ill monkeypox patients, drawing on its stockpile of 1.7 million treatment courses that it acquired in the event of a smallpox outbreak. The Biden administration said it would make available 50,000 treatment courses to local health departments this week in addition to 20,000 courses sent previously.

SIGA relies on partners including [Catalent Inc.](#) to make the pills and Packaging Coordinators Inc. to bottle and box them. Tpoxx was approved in the U.S. to treat smallpox in 2018. Because Tpoxx hasn't been approved to treat monkeypox, it isn't always easy for infected patients to get it.

Under special protocols created by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Tpoxx can be used to treat patients with severe symptoms, which can include bleeding and [excruciatingly painful sores](#) on the genitals. Doctors and support staff have to submit paperwork on each patient they treat and conduct patient follow-up visits.

Tpoxx never underwent human testing because smallpox was eradicated decades ago. Instead, the drug was tested in animals against viruses from the same genus as smallpox, including in monkeys with monkeypox.

The data showed that monkeys given a lethal dose of monkeypox were saved when given Tpoxx, said SIGA Chief Scientific Officer Dennis Hruby, who works from his home in Bend, Ore. Most of SIGA's employees work at the company's research-and-development facilities in Corvallis, Ore., near Oregon State University, where Dr. Hruby previously served as chairman of the microbiology department.

SIGA, which has its corporate headquarters in New York City, was founded in 1995 to develop a strep-throat vaccine using technology created by founding scientists Vincent Fischetti at Rockefeller University in New York and Dr. Hruby.

By 2001, SIGA shares were faltering, and the company was largely relying on grants from the National Institutes of Health, Dr. Hruby said. After Sept. 11, the federal government made billions of dollars in new research funding available for biodefense research. SIGA shifted its focus to drugs and vaccines that could be used in the event of a bioterrorism attack. SIGA was awarded more than \$1 billion in government contracts to develop a smallpox drug and manufacture it for the U.S. stockpile.

SIGA acquired the rights to Tpoxx in 2004. The drug appeared to be effective against smallpox in laboratory testing, but animal studies looked less promising, said Dr. Hruby. The company bet that it might bring the drug to market if it could figure out dosing, he said.

"We were developing a drug for a disease that doesn't exist," said Dr. Hruby. "It took a long time to figure out."

SIGA's phones began ringing soon after the monkeypox virus was detected [in the U.K. in May](#). Doctors outside the U.S. asked how to obtain Tpoxx. U.S. doctors had questions about administering the drug, which typically requires six pills daily over two weeks. To boost the drug's effectiveness, patients take the pills after a high-fat meal.

Dr. Gomez said he fielded a Saturday-night phone call in May from a European public-health official eager to obtain Tpoxx doses as cases mounted in the official's country. It took two months of wrangling with the country's contracting officials to secure the order.

Tpoxx appears to be safe, and the animal data supports its use as an antiviral against monkeypox, doctors said. Doctors reported in the Journal of the American Medical Association on Monday that among 25 patients treated with Tpoxx from early June to mid-August, [40% had their lesions healed](#) after one week and 92% had their lesions healed and were without pain within three weeks. The study's authors said large-scale studies are needed to determine whether patients recover because of the drug or the natural course of disease.

Because the drug hasn't been proven to work in humans, the CDC requires that doctors collect and submit data from patients and have at least two follow-up visits with patients who have been prescribed the drug, even if they are feeling better.

The U.K. approved Tpoxx to treat monkeypox in July, and the European Medicines Agency approved it in January for smallpox, monkeypox and cowpox. The U.S. is unlikely to authorize Tpoxx formally for monkeypox before it sees human study data, which could start coming in by the end of this year, SIGA executives said. A U.S. study is being planned by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, a spokeswoman said. Oxford University researchers in the U.K. [began a study this month](#).

"It is really important to know whether or not this drug works," said Jason Zucker, an assistant professor of medicine at Columbia University Irving Medical Center, which has prescribed Tpoxx to more than 100 patients.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/25 CDC: mutations impaired vax effectiveness</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.msn.com/en-us/money/other/omicron-s-mutations-impaired-vaccine-effectiveness-cdc-says/ar-AA115Zc0">https://www.msn.com/en-us/money/other/omicron-s-mutations-impaired-vaccine-effectiveness-cdc-says/ar-AA115Zc0</a>
GIST	<p>(Bloomberg) -- Almost 40% of people hospitalized in the US with the Covid subvariant that circulated this spring were vaccinated and boosted, highlighting how new strains have mutated to more readily escape the immunity offered by current shots.</p> <p>The findings from scientists at the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention underscore the importance of having Covid shots that are better at targeting omicron subvariants.</p> <p>From the end of March through May, when the omicron BA.2 and BA.2.12.1 subvariants were dominant in the US, weekly hospitalization rates increased for all adults -- with those over 65 hit the hardest. Even so, the total number of hospitalizations remained much lower than when the delta variant was rampant last fall.</p> <p>The overall number of hospitalizations is an important point, said Abraar Karan, an infectious disease doctor at Stanford University.</p> <p>"When you look at who's hospitalized, it's much more likely that they will have been vaccinated because so many people are vaccinated now," Karan said. "The real comparison is how many hospitalizations do we have now versus in the past when people were not vaccinated or not up-to-date with boosters."</p> <p>CDC scientists found that vaccines and boosters did a better job of keeping people with delta infections out of the hospital than those with later variants. Effectiveness decreased slightly with the BA.1 variant, then changed significantly with BA.2 -- with a much greater share of hospitalized adults who had been vaccinated with at least one booster.</p> <p>Immunity from vaccines starts to wane within six months, so staying up-to-date with shots is key to being fully protected. <a href="#">Fewer than half</a> of Americans have gotten a booster shot.</p>

	<p>Adults with at least two booster shots fared better than other people when BA.2 was dominant. The majority of those admitted to the hospital also had at least one underlying condition. Unvaccinated adults were more than three times as likely to be hospitalized, but breakthrough infections still represented a significant number of the severe Covid cases, the data show.</p> <p>US regulators have pushed Moderna Inc., Pfizer Inc. and BioNTech SE to expedite development of omicron-specific boosters for a September rollout. The drugmakers this week <a href="#">submitted</a> early data to the US Food and Drug Administration seeking emergency clearance for updated shots that target the BA.4 and BA.5 virus strains. Scientists and vaccinemakers are already <a href="#">beginning to look toward next-generation shots</a> that may provide longer-lasting protection against more variants.</p> <p>The new report's findings also indicate that along with vaccination, other pharmaceutical and non-pharmaceutical measures should be used by those at highest risk of getting Covid. That includes easy access to therapeutics such as Pfizer's antiviral drug Paxlovid and Gilead Sciences' remdesivir, as well as AstraZeneca's Evusheld for immunocompromised people. Scientists also note that wearing a mask can help guard the wearer from getting sick.</p> <p>Though the number of Covid deaths is the lowest it has been since last July, the US continues to see hundreds of deaths each day from Covid, CDC data <a href="#">show</a>.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/25 Pakistan: flooding worst disaster in decade</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cnn.com/2022/08/25/asia/pakistan-flooding-climate-minister-intl-hnk/index.html">https://www.cnn.com/2022/08/25/asia/pakistan-flooding-climate-minister-intl-hnk/index.html</a>
GIST	<p><b>Islamabad (CNN)</b>At least 33 million people have been affected by deadly flooding in <a href="#">Pakistan</a>, the country's climate change minister said on Thursday.</p> <p>Since mid-June, 937 people have died from severe rain and flooding across the South Asian country, according to the country's National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA).</p> <p>Sherry Rehman, the minister for climate change, called the floods "unprecedented" and "the worst humanitarian disaster of this decade."</p> <p>"Pakistan is going through its eighth cycle of monsoon while normally the country has only three to four cycles of rain," Rehman said. "The percentages of super flood torrents are shocking."</p> <p>She highlighted in particular the impact on the south of the country, adding that "maximum" relief efforts are underway.</p> <p>The NDMA, Pakistani Army, and the Provincial Disaster Management Authority are working to assist those affected -- but there is a "dire" need for shelter and relief due to the rising number of homeless and displaced families, she said.</p> <p>The southern province of Sindh, which has been badly hit by the flooding, has asked for 1 million tents, while nearby Balochistan province has requested 100,000 tents, she added.</p> <p>"Pakistan's priority, at the moment, is this climate-induced humanitarian disaster of epic proportions," Rehman said, urging the international community to provide aid given Pakistan's "limited" resources.</p> <p>Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal separately told Reuters that 30 million people had been affected, a figure that would represent about 15% of the South Asian country's population.</p> <p>UN agency Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said in an update on Thursday that the monsoon rains had affected some 3 million people in Pakistan of which 184,000 have been displaced to relief camps across the country.</p>



Funding and reconstruction efforts will be a challenge for cash-strapped Pakistan, which is having to cut spending to ensure that the International Monetary Fund approves the release of much-needed bailout money.

The NDMA said in a report that in the past 24 hours, 150 kilometers (about 93 miles) of roads had been damaged across the country and more than 82,000 homes partially or fully damaged.

Since mid-June, when the monsoon began, more than 3,000 kilometers (1,864 miles) of road, 130 bridges and 495,000 homes have been damaged, according to NDMA's last situation report, figures also echoed in the OHCA report.

#### **'The rain hasn't stopped'**

A vast majority of this damage is in Sindh.

"Brother, the rain has not stopped for the past three months ... We are living in a rickshaw with our children because the roof of our mud house is leaking," a woman who declined to be named told Reuters TV in Hyderabad, Sindh's second-largest city.

Seated with three of her children in the rickshaw she said: "Where can we go? The gutters are overflowing, and our courtyard is filled up with sewage. Our houses and alleys have turned into a floating garbage bin."

OCHA also warned that alerts had been issued for floods, river overflows, and landslides in several areas of Pakistan, and heavy rainfall was forecast for the next two days, too, over most of the country.

Rehman said Sindh has received 784% more rainfall this month than the August average, while the province of Balochistan had received nearly 500% more.

Twenty-three districts of Sindh have been declared calamity-hit, she said.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/25 Study: Hurricane Harvey hit Latinos hardest</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2022/08/25/hurricane-harvey-climate-change-study/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2022/08/25/hurricane-harvey-climate-change-study/</a>
GIST	<p>Scientists have long known that warming temperatures supercharged the rainfall from Hurricane Harvey. But now in a landmark <a href="#">new study</a> about the 2017 hurricane, they've gone a step further. In the new research, released Thursday in the journal Nature Communications, scientists showed not only that climate change greatly increased Harvey's flooding but also that the climate-boosted flooding hit low-income Hispanic communities the hardest.</p> <p>The finding shows that researchers can now do more than quantify how climate change led to additional homes being flooded. They can also assess how weather extremes, propelled by climate change, harm some groups more than others.</p> <p>"There is now a clear line between how human beings have affected the environment to how that could impact a particular storm or event, and how that affects the most vulnerable communities," said Daniel Gilford, a climate scientist at the nonprofit Climate Central who was not involved in the Harvey study. "And I think this paper does an excellent job of making that connection."</p> <p>Once upon a time — or about two decades ago — scientists often said that they could not connect any given hurricane or other weather extreme to climate change. The science didn't exist yet.</p> <p>Gradually, researchers began to use models for two separate climate systems: one with human-induced global warming and one without. By comparing extreme weather events in the two different worlds,</p>

scientists can now say how climate change has influenced the likelihood or severity of particular heat waves, droughts, floods and hurricanes.

But it's only recently that scientists have also begun to track climate change's fingerprints on the impacts of given events: quantifying the number of homes flooded by climate change, for example, or billions of dollars in damage done. Last year, researchers estimated that global warming was responsible for at least [\\$8 billion](#) of Hurricane Sandy's damage in New York City and the surrounding areas.

When Harvey doused Houston, it also filled Billy Guevara's home in the city's northeast with 17 inches of floodwater. Guevara, who is blind, remembers his seeing-eye dog perched on a grooming table to stay out of the rising waters; he remembers being without power for four days as the water crept up his driveway; he remembers being crushed by the news that a few miles away, several of his cousins and his aunt and uncle had been swept away in their van by the floods.

But he also remembers the smell. "Like a wet dog," he said. "Just damp."

Five years after Hurricane Harvey, Guevara, 48, has little doubt in his mind as to one of the main causes of the disaster he experienced. "I blame a lot of this on global warming," he said. "There's no doubt about it."

For the new study on Harvey, scientists built on research that quantified how much of the hurricane's rainfall was due to temperature change from the burning of fossil fuels. (Warmer air holds more moisture, which can lead to more intense rainfall during hurricanes.)

On the low end, researchers estimated that global warming was responsible for about 20 percent of the precipitation that fell during Harvey; on the high end, that figure could be as much as 38 percent. When the scientists plugged those numbers into a flood model, they found that climate change had increased the depth of the flooding between 8 and 10 inches.

For somewhere between 32 percent and 50 percent of homes, those eight to 10 inches were the difference between the home flooding and the home coming out of the hurricane unscathed.

"The first big finding is that climate change can serve as the tipping point between flooding and not flooding," said Kevin Smiley, a professor of sociology and Louisiana State University and the lead author of the paper. "That extra few inches could mean the difference between having a very soaked lawn and having a few inches of water in your home — which could mean thousands of dollars of damages."

Researchers then analyzed how different groups were affected by the flooding. According to the study, neighborhoods with more Latino residents also see more flooding attributed to climate change. For example, Latino households make up only 36 percent of the properties in Houston that did not flood during the hurricane. They also accounted for 48 percent of the properties that flooded because of climate change, as well as 50 percent of the properties that would have flooded anyway.

The researchers did not attempt to identify the precise causes of the disparity, but environmental justice advocates have long argued that poor drainage and outdated infrastructure can magnify flood damage in low-income neighborhoods.

According to Smiley, that's a clear demonstration of how climate change is exacerbating existing inequalities. "The core question of the entire study was, who bears the brunt of climate change?" Smiley said. "When you have these disproportionate impacts, it raises questions about the urban development processes that contributed to it."

The study also showed that areas outside the Federal Emergency Management Agency's 100-year flood plain also suffered greater climate-change-induced flooding. The 100-year flood plain designates areas that FEMA believes have a 1 percent chance of flooding in any given year. Homeowners with federally backed loans in these areas are required to purchase flood insurance.

But because many of the damaged homes were outside the flood plain, Smiley worries that many homeowners did not have flood insurance. “Outside the flood plain, you may not even be aware that you’re at risk,” he said. “You may not have even thought about purchasing flood insurance.”

Guevara’s home had flooded once before, during Tropical Storm Allison in 2001, so he knew that there was some level of risk. But neither he nor his mother, who lived next door, had flood insurance by the time Harvey rolled around. “They said we weren’t in the flood plain, so it wasn’t necessary,” he said in a phone call. “We let our flood insurance lapse — we couldn’t afford it anymore.”

Smiley and one of his co-authors, Michael Wehner, a senior scientist at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory in Berkeley, Calif., say that they mostly want the study to inform the public and also to spur places such as Harris County — which encompasses Houston — to address underlying socioeconomic inequalities.

But both also note that similar studies could be used for litigation — one of the [original goals](#) of what’s known as attribution science. Now that scientists can trace specific damage to climate change, it may be possible to someday sue fossil fuel companies for helping to spew greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

So far, similar [lawsuits](#) haven’t made it far in the U.S. context. But with the United Nations focusing more on the idea of “[loss and damage](#)” for climate-related disasters, such research could become increasingly useful.

“It’s not a decision for me to make, obviously,” said Wehner. “But this is a defensible way to establish losses and damages.”

The prospect of another flood is never far away. “It’s always in the back of our minds whenever a system comes into the Gulf,” Guevara said. “There’s always the fear.”

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HEADLINE	<b>08/25 US ambassador arrives in Sudan</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/us-sends-ambassador-sudan-first-time-25-years-204451">https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/us-sends-ambassador-sudan-first-time-25-years-204451</a>
GIST	<p>John Godfrey, the United States’ first ambassador to Sudan in more than a quarter of a century, <a href="#">arrived</a> in Khartoum on Wednesday, marking the most recent sign of a thawing relationship between the two countries after Sudan’s removal from the U.S. State Department’s state sponsors of terrorism list in 2020.</p> <p>“I am delighted to arrive in Sudan,” Godfrey wrote on Wednesday in a <a href="#">tweet</a>. “I look forward to deepening relations between Americans and Sudanese and to supporting the Sudanese people’s aspirations to freedom, peace, justice, and a transition to democracy.”</p> <p>The U.S. Embassy in Khartoum confirmed Godfrey’s arrival, writing that the new ambassador also sought to “advance ... priorities related to peace and security, economic development, and food security.”</p> <p>The United States has long maintained a contentious relationship with Sudan. Washington’s relationship with Khartoum grew particularly acrimonious under the leadership of Sudanese dictator Omar al-Bashir, who ruled the country from 1989 to 2019 despite being indicted by the International Criminal Court. In Bashir’s first decade of rule, Sudan developed <a href="#">close ties</a> to Al Qaeda and other Islamist militant groups and sheltered Osama bin Laden after his exile from Saudi Arabia from 1992 until 1996. The United States designated Sudan as a state sponsor of terror in 1993 after it emerged that Bashir had harbored militants from Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad, and the Abu Nidal Organization. Following the designation, Washington imposed heavy sanctions on Khartoum, largely isolating the Sudanese economy from international markets.</p>

	<p>Bilateral relations between the two countries reached their nadir in August 1998 after the administration of President Bill Clinton ordered the bombing of Sudan's As-Shifa pharmaceutical factory, which it wrongly claimed had been used to produce chemical weapons for Al Qaeda. In the second half of the 1990s, however, Bashir worked to rehabilitate his image abroad and ordered bin Laden and other militants to leave Sudan. Many of them subsequently found shelter in Afghanistan, where they fought against the United States during its invasion in 2001. Relations between Sudan and the United States <a href="#">improved again</a> after Bashir was overthrown in 2019, and the Trump administration removed Sudan from the state sponsors of terror list after it unofficially joined the Abraham Accords and agreed to recognize and normalize relations with Israel. However, Washington and Khartoum again fell out after Sudanese general Abdel Fattah al-Burhan <a href="#">overthrew</a> the transitional civilian government in a coup d'état in October 2021.</p> <p>Sudan's current political status is contested. While Burhan maintains power, Khartoum has been <a href="#">rocked</a> by nonviolent protests over the past year, largely organized by the Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC) opposition coalition. Burhan has also committed in <a href="#">principle</a> to a future civilian government replacing him, although he has not specified the timetable or precise mechanism for that transition.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/25 Pentagon: broad changes military doctrine</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/25/us/politics/pentagon-civilian-casualties.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/25/us/politics/pentagon-civilian-casualties.html</a>
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON — The Pentagon on Thursday announced sweeping changes aimed at reducing risks to civilians in U.S. military operations by fostering a culture in which those in the field view preventing such harm as a core part of their missions.</p> <p>A <a href="#">36-page action plan</a> directs broad changes at every level of military planning, doctrine, training and policy in not only counterterrorism drone strikes but also in any future major conflict. It includes emerging war-fighting tactics like attacks on satellites and computer systems.</p> <p>The directive — which follows an <a href="#">investigative series</a> by The New York Times into civilian deaths from American airstrikes — contains 11 major objectives. They are aimed at helping commanders better understand the presence of noncombatants before any operations begin, and they require operators to consider potential consequences for civilians in any combat action.</p> <p>The steps include putting officials responsible for reducing civilian harm inside the combatant commands and Pentagon policy offices; imposing a new system to reduce the risk of misidentifying targets and “confirmation bias” — the tendency to favor information that confirms pre-existing beliefs; and creating a 30-person center to handle departmentwide analysis and training regarding civilian protection.</p> <p>In a memo to top military commanders and civilian leaders, Defense Secretary Lloyd J. Austin III said the Pentagon must prioritize civilian protection and incorporate more attentive thinking about that goal as doctrine in its mission planning.</p> <p>“We will ensure that we are well prepared to prevent, mitigate and respond to civilian harm in current and future conflicts,” Mr. Austin wrote, adding, “Importantly, this plan is scalable and relevant to both counterterrorism operations and large-scale conflicts against peer adversaries.”</p> <p>(The term peer adversaries is widely understood to be shorthand for major nation-state competitors like Russia and China, which engage in space and cyberoperations as well as traditional air, land and sea combat.)</p> <p>Some human rights advocates, who have lobbied the Pentagon for years to strengthen its policies and practices to prevent civilian harm, praised the plan's scope and breadth.</p>

“This is a sea change,” said Marc Garlasco, a former Pentagon official who later investigated civilian deaths caused by U.S. military operations for the United Nations. “It doesn’t mean civilians won’t be killed in war anymore. They will. But if this plan is implemented and properly resourced, it will ensure fewer people will die and create a way for the Defense Department to respond when civilians are killed.”

Still, Mr. Garlasco said the plan did not fully address several questions, including how the military would improve its ability to estimate civilian casualties; how information from outside groups would be incorporated into the Pentagon’s civilian harm assessments; and whether individual officials or commanders would be held accountable for violations.

The plan also does not say whether the new efforts will include reopening or studying past incidents that resulted in civilian deaths. “Investigating and making amends for past harm is critical to achieving the kind of accountability and learning that the action plan rightly strives for,” said Annie Shiel, a senior adviser for the Center for Civilians in Conflict.

U.S. military members are taught that the laws of war prevent intentionally targeting civilians or carrying out strikes when the anticipated scale of civilian deaths is disproportionate to the combat aim. Military leaders and presidents have also long [articulated a policy](#) of minimizing or trying to prevent collateral damage.

Nevertheless, the laws of war and military doctrine accept that some civilian casualties will occur in combat. But beyond the moral weight of those deaths and damage, the consequences have become far more acute in the 21st century. Among other things, the widespread sharing of videos from cellphones and other sources on social media has sharply increased the risk of backlash that can undermine broader strategic aims.

Against that backdrop, the Defense Department has come under pressure to do more to prevent civilian harm.

Human rights organizations have worked for years to call greater attention to civilian casualties. Reporters at a number of news outlets have written investigative articles about botched strikes. Congress has imposed [restrictions on some military funds](#) until the Pentagon submits a civilian casualty policy. Early this year, the RAND Corporation published a [congressionally mandated report](#) that critically evaluated the military’s procedures on civilian casualties.

[Officials have](#) said that the New York Times series, which was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for international reporting this year, had also helped bring about the changes. It included an [investigation into systemic failures](#) to prevent civilian deaths in Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan, based on a trove of internal Pentagon reviews and visits to the sites of more than 100 incidents. Other parts of the series revealed a [covered-up strike in Syria in 2019](#) that killed dozens of women and children and a [botched drone strike in Kabul](#) that killed 10 people last August, during the chaotic U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Mr. Austin, a retired four-star Army general with combat experience, [pledged in November to overhaul military procedures](#) and hold top officers responsible for carrying out changes. In January, he ordered officials to develop the document released on Thursday, the Civilian Harm Mitigation and Response Action Plan.

The drafting of the plan over the past several months was overseen by Colin H. Kahl, the Pentagon’s top policy official, who worked closely with senior military officers.

A senior Defense Department official, in a briefing to reporters, said the plan envisioned spending tens of millions of dollars per year, some of which would come from the Pentagon budget and some of which they intended to request from Congress as new funding. It would include about 150 new positions throughout the department, including about 30 for the civilian protection center, which is expected to begin work in the coming months.

In his memo, Mr. Austin called the changes “both ambitious and necessary” and said the effort would need continuous support from future administrations to succeed. Officials have said the idea is to embed the new practices and sensibility in a way that would make them difficult to abandon.

“The department has laid out a credible plan for beginning to address these issues, but it now needs to be effectively implemented and resourced,” said Senator Jack Reed, a Rhode Island Democrat who heads the Armed Services Committee.

Much of the document is dense with new bureaucratic procedures aimed at ensuring that greater attention to potential impact on civilians — and civilian infrastructure like power plants and water-purification systems — during mission planning is incorporated as basic doctrine.

“It’s just trying to apply a consistent approach across the department so that this becomes a matter of how we do business systemically” instead of episodically, Brig. Gen. Patrick S. Ryder, the Pentagon press secretary, told reporters.

Other highlights from the plan include standardizing reporting on how the Pentagon collects, shares and analyzes data related to civilian casualties, with a mechanism for the public to submit allegations and new procedures for investigating such claims.

The plan also expands how the U.S. military can respond to victims, including condolence payments to survivors and family members of those harmed, as well as paying for medical care and the repair of damaged infrastructure.

Recent efforts to provide such aid to civilian casualty survivors and their family members have largely faltered. No one has received condolence payments or other forms of monetary assistance from the U.S. military for the drone strike in Kabul last year, for example.

Joanna Naples-Mitchell, a human rights attorney representing more than a dozen victims of civilian casualty incidents acknowledged by the U.S. military, said that while the plan represents a hopeful shift toward providing more forms of assistance to victims, few payments have been made.

“I myself have submitted multiple cases in the last year for consideration where families have loved ones who were injured or killed or both and they were requesting amends,” she said, “and those requests were denied without any explanation.”

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HEADLINE	<b>08/26 British household energy bills to rise 80%</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/08/26/business/economy-news-inflation-stocks#uk-energy-price-cap">https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/08/26/business/economy-news-inflation-stocks#uk-energy-price-cap</a>
GIST	<p>Energy prices paid by most British households are set to rise 80 percent this fall, putting further pressure on consumers and stoking inflation.</p> <p>On Friday, Ofgem, the government’s energy regulator, said the so-called cap on what a typical household would pay for electricity and natural gas over a year would rise to 3,549 pounds (about \$4,200) from the current £1,971.</p> <p>Consumers and businesses in Britain and elsewhere across Europe are being hit with massive price increases for energy as the war in Ukraine stretches already tight markets for electricity and natural gas.</p> <p>“This will be devastating for many families,” Jonathan Brearley, chief executive of the regulator, told the BBC. Looking into early next year, he said, “the difficult news I have to give today is that prices look like they are continuing to rise.”</p> <p>The increase, which takes effect in October and covers about 24 million households, follows a <a href="#">54 percent rise in April</a>.</p>



“The pressure on stretched households will only intensify, and the calls for support will get ever louder,” wrote Martin Young, a utility analyst at Investec, a financial services firm, in a recent note to clients. Mr. Young expects another jump, to £4,210, in January.

[Consumer prices in Britain](#) rose 10.1 percent last month from a year earlier, the fastest pace in 40 years, [squeezing household budgets](#). The Bank of England has predicted that inflation [would peak at 13 percent in October](#) as the new energy prices turn up in household bills. Other estimates are higher; analysts at Citi have said the rate could reach as high as 18 percent next year.

The price hikes and how to deal with them have become a hot subject of political discourse in Britain and across Europe. While the British government has offered a package that includes £400 per household to help residents with soaring bills, a wide range of politicians, consumer advocates and energy executives now say that more forceful intervention is needed to cushion households from the surge in energy costs.

Recently, Britain’s opposition Labour Party said that it would freeze energy tariffs where they are now, paying part of the £29 billion cost by increasing the so-called windfall taxes that the Conservative government imposed earlier this year on oil and gas giants operating in the North Sea.

The main component in Ofgem’s calculations was a more than doubling of wholesale electricity and natural gas costs. These account for about 70 percent of the new price cap.

Coping with increases of such magnitude is beyond the scope of Ofgem, whose role is to protect consumers from profiteering by suppliers, Mr. Brearley said. “The truth is this is beyond the capacity of the industry and the regulator to address,” he added.

Britain’s governing Conservative Party is picking a new prime minister to replace Boris Johnson in early September, choosing between Liz Truss and Rishi Sunak. Mr. Brearley called on the winning candidate to intervene decisively in the energy markets.

“What I am clear about is the prime minister with his or her ministerial team will need to act urgently and decisively to address this,” he said. “The outlook for the winter without any action looks very difficult indeed.”

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HEADLINE	<b>08/26 China’s drought adds to economic woes</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/26/business/economy/china-drought-economy-climate.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/26/business/economy/china-drought-economy-climate.html</a>
GIST	<p>HONG KONG — Car assembly plants and electronics factories in southwestern China have closed for lack of power. Owners of electric cars are waiting overnight at charging stations to recharge their vehicles. Rivers are so low there that ships can no longer carry supplies.</p> <p>A record-setting drought and an 11-week heat wave are causing broad disruption in a region that depends on dams for more than three-quarters of its electricity generation. The factory shutdowns and logistical delays are hindering China’s efforts to revive its economy as the country’s leader, Xi Jinping, prepares to claim a third term in power this autumn.</p> <p>The ruling Communist Party is already struggling to reverse a slowdown in China, the world’s second largest economy, caused by the country’s strict Covid lockdowns and a slumping real estate market. Young people are finding it hard to get jobs, while uncertainty over the economic outlook is compelling residents to save instead of spend, and to hold off on buying new homes.</p> <p>Now, the extreme heat is adding to frustration by snarling power supplies, threatening crops and setting off wildfires. Reduced electricity from hydroelectric dams has prompted China to burn more coal, a large contributor to air pollution and to greenhouse gas emissions that cause global warming.</p>



Many cities around the country have been forced to impose rolling blackouts or limit energy use. In Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan Province, several neighborhoods went without electricity for more than 10 hours a day.

Vera Wang, a Chengdu resident, said that just to charge her electric car, her boyfriend waited in a long line overnight at a charging station that was only partly operating. It was 4 a.m. by the time he reached the front of the line.

“The line was so long that it extended from the underground parking lot to the road outside,” she said.

The heat wave has scorched China for more than two months, stretching from Sichuan in the southwest to the country’s eastern coast and sending the mercury above 104 degrees on many days. In Chongqing, a sprawling metropolis in the southwest with around 20 million people, the temperature soared to 113 degrees last week, the first time such a high reading had been recorded in a Chinese city outside the western desert region of Xinjiang.

The searing heat set off wildfires in the mountains and forests on Chongqing’s outskirts, where thousands of firefighters and volunteers have worked to put out blazes. Residents said the air smelled of acrid smoke.

The drought has dried up dozens of rivers and reservoirs in the region and cut Sichuan’s hydropower generation capacity by half, hurting industrial production. Volkswagen closed its sprawling, 6,000-employee factory in Chengdu for the past week and a half, and Toyota also temporarily suspended operations at its assembly plant.

Foxconn, the giant Taiwanese electronics manufacturer, and CATL, the world’s largest maker of electric car batteries, have both curtailed production at factories in the vicinity.

In Ezhou, a city in central China near Wuhan, the Yangtze River is now at its lowest level for this time of year since record-keeping began there in 1865. People’s Daily, the main newspaper of the Communist Party, reported on Aug. 19 that the Yangtze River had fallen to the same average level it normally reaches at the end of the winter dry season.

But the disruptions from the hydropower shortfall are being felt far from the southwest, including in China’s eastern cities, which are buyers of hydropower. Some factories and commercial buildings in cities like Hangzhou and Shanghai are rationing electricity.

Kevin Ni, an online marketing worker in Hangzhou, said that his office was stifling because few air-conditioners were allowed to run.

“We have to eat ice pops and drink iced drinks,” he said. “I just put my hands on the ice pops, that cools me the most.”

The falling water levels in major rivers that serve the region’s main transport hubs have also led to delays elsewhere in the supply chain. The Yangtze River has receded so much that many oceangoing ships can no longer reach upstream ports. The upper Yangtze basin normally gets half its entire annual rainfall just in July and August, so the failure of this year’s rains may mean a long wait for more water.

That is forcing China to divert large numbers of trucks to carry their cargo. A single ship can require 500 or more trucks to move its cargo.

“We’re losing a few months of really efficient shipping,” said Even Rogers Pay, a food and agriculture analyst at Trivium, a Beijing consulting firm.

The heat wave and drought are also starting to drive food prices higher in China, especially for fruit and vegetables. Farmers’ fields and orchards are wilting. Sichuan is a leading grower in China of apples, plums

and other fruit, and fruit trees that die could take five years to replace. The price of bok choy, a popular cabbage, has nearly doubled in Wuhan this month.

“That’s going to create more economic pain, which is the last thing the leadership wants to see,” Ms. Pay said.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs and four other departments issued an [emergency notice](#) warning on Tuesday that the drought posed a “severe threat” to China’s autumn harvest. China’s cabinet on Wednesday approved \$1.5 billion for disaster relief and assistance to rice farmers and another \$1.5 billion for overall farm subsidies.

The government has [urged local officials](#) to seek out more water sources and allocate more electricity to support farmers and promote the planting of leafy vegetables, which are highly perishable, in big cities. Fire trucks have been used to spray water on fields and deliver water to pig farms.

The extreme weather sweeping across China also has potential implications for the world’s efforts to halt climate change. Beijing has sought to offset at least part of the lost hydropower from the drought by ramping up the use of coal-fired power plants. China’s domestic mining of coal has been at or near record levels, and customs data shows that its imports of coal from Russia reached a new high last month.

But China’s reliance on the fossil fuel raises questions about its commitment to slowing the growth of its carbon emissions.

“In the short term in China, the very, very painful realization is that only coal can serve as the base” for the electricity supply, said Ma Jun, the director of the Institute of Public and Environmental Affairs, a Beijing environmental group. Sichuan Province has lured energy-intensive industries like chemical manufacturing for many years with extremely low electricity prices, he said, and some of these industries have squandered power through inefficiency.

Mr. Ma struck an optimistic note, however, about the direction of China’s climate strategy, saying that in the medium term, “China is very committed to carbon targets and renewable energy.”

The government has sought to mitigate the effects of global warming on its economy. The National Development and Reform Commission, China’s top economic planning ministry, set up a working group last winter to analyze the effects of climate change on water-related industries like hydroelectric dams.

While such efforts may help China preserve the viability of renewable energy programs, they may not prompt China to limit the burning of coal this year as a quick fix, said Ed Cunningham, the director of the Asia Energy and Sustainability Initiative at the Harvard Kennedy School.

“They’re much more comfortable with coal,” Mr. Cunningham said, “and the reality is that when there’s a shortage of hydro, they use coal.”

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HEADLINE	<b>08/25 Report: business travelers staying home</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/aug/25/report-finds-business-travelers-staying-home-amid/">https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/aug/25/report-finds-business-travelers-staying-home-amid/</a>
GIST	<p>A new report finds that 40% of U.S. business travelers who took at least three trips a year before the pandemic expect “never again” to travel for work due to rising prices.</p> <p>In the report released Thursday, Morning Consult found that another 9% believe they’ll travel again within the next month, 14% believe they’ll travel in the next 1-3 months and 13% believe they’ll travel again in the next 4-6 months.</p> <p>The remaining 24% were split evenly between those expecting to travel in 7-12 months and those expecting to travel in “over a year.”</p>

The poll found the share of Americans who plan on work-related trips in the coming year dropped by 10 percentage points between February and May as rising prices increased travel expenses.

After a busy early summer travel season, the report found “economic uncertainty” driving businesses to cut funds for blended business and leisure trips, leaving workers to pay for more costs out of pocket.

“While concerns of rising COVID-19 cases may play a part in this decline, a more significant factor is the economy,” Morning Consult said.

Although inflation in consumer prices is leveling off, the costs of gas, airfare, food and lodging have all skyrocketed amid a post-pandemic summer rebound in travel demand.

Morning Consult found the shares of adults planning to travel domestically, travel internationally, stay in a U.S. hotel or fly in the coming year have all plummeted since 2021 as a result.

According to the report, 43% of the 2,200 Americans who answered multiple surveys from last October to this month say they’re traveling less this summer “because of high prices.”

“Business travel will never return to normal,” Morning Consult concluded.

The report comes as polls have shown Americans cutting back on routine travel and commuting to save up for holidays like the upcoming Labor Day weekend.

According to a June survey from AAA Mid-Atlantic, a quarter of Washington, D.C., drivers took fewer trips this summer because of high gas prices — and nearly 20% adjusted their dining and lodging budget.

AAA spokesperson Ragina C. Ali says Labor Day weekend travel will “likely reach pre-pandemic levels” as Americans hit the road again.

“Record high summer gas prices haven’t deterred road trippers and AAA does not expect Labor Day weekend travel to be any different,” Ms. Ali said. “However, motorists tell AAA they have adjusted driving behavior and vacation spending to accommodate for higher gas prices.”

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HEADLINE	<b>08/26 USCG ship unable to dock in Solomon Is.</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/26/us-ship-unable-to-get-solomon-islands-permission-to-dock-says-washington">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/26/us-ship-unable-to-get-solomon-islands-permission-to-dock-says-washington</a>
GIST	<p>A United States coast guard vessel was unable to enter Solomon Islands for a routine port call because its government did not respond to a request to refuel and provision, a US official said.</p> <p>The Solomons government did not immediately answer a Reuters request for comment. It has had a tense relationship with the US and its allies since striking a security pact with China in May.</p> <p>The USCGC Oliver Henry was on patrol for illegal fishing in the South Pacific for a regional fisheries agency when it failed to obtain entry to refuel at Honiara, the Solomons’ capital, a US coast guard press officer said in an emailed statement.</p> <p>The vessel was diverted to Papua New Guinea instead, the official said.</p> <p>The British navy declined to comment on social media reports that Solomon Islands port access was also not forthcoming for patrol vessel HMS Spey – also taking part in monitoring for illegal fishing in the economic exclusion zones of Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.</p>

“Ships’ programmess are under constant review and it is routine practice for them to change,” a Royal Navy spokesperson said in an emailed statement. “For reasons of operational security we do not discuss details.”

The Solomons’ government and Beijing have ruled out a Chinese military base on the islands, although a leaked draft showed the security agreement would allow the Chinese navy to dock and replenish.

The fisheries agency for the Pacific Islands Forum, a block of 17 Pacific nations, has a maritime surveillance centre in Honiara, and holds annual surveillance operations for illegal fishing with assistance from Australia, the US, New Zealand and France.

The Oliver Henry had been scheduled for a routine logistics port call in Solomon Islands, said Kristin Kam, public affairs officer for the US coast guard in Hawaii.

“The government of the Solomon Islands did not respond to the US government’s request for diplomatic clearance for the vessel to refuel and provision in Honiara,” she said in a statement.

“The US Department of State is in contact with the government of the Solomon Islands and expect all future clearances will be provided to US ships.”

HMS Spey had Fiji navy officers on board as it worked alongside long-range maritime patrol aircraft from Australia and New Zealand and the US coast guard in the operation to gather information for the Pacific Islands Forum fisheries agency, the Royal Navy said in a statement on Thursday.

It carried out inspections of suspect vessels in ports as well as boardings at sea, it said.

The Royal Navy spokesman said it “looks forward to visiting the Solomon Islands at a later date”.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/26 Day 184 of the Russia invasion</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/26/russia-ukraine-war-latest-what-we-know-on-day-184-of-the-invasion">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/26/russia-ukraine-war-latest-what-we-know-on-day-184-of-the-invasion</a>
GIST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Shelling temporarily <a href="#">disconnected the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant</a> from Ukraine’s grid. Fires caused by shelling cut the last remaining power line to the plant on Thursday, temporarily disconnecting it from Ukraine’s national grid for the first time in nearly 40 years of operation, the country’s nuclear power firm, Energoatom, said.</li><li>• Ukraine’s energy minister, German Galushchenko, said the UN nuclear watchdog could travel to the Zaporizhzhia plant <a href="#">in the “coming days”</a>. The UN nuclear watchdog’s chief, Rafael Grossi, earlier <a href="#">said his team were “very, very close”</a> to being able to go to the plant.</li><li>• The White House called on Russia to agree to a demilitarised zone around the plant, after the US president, Joe Biden, spoke to his Ukrainian counterpart, Volodymyr Zelenskiy. Biden congratulated him on the country’s 31st independence day, celebrated on Wednesday. <b>Zelenskiy said he had “a great conversation” and thanked Biden for his “unwavering” support.</b> It comes a day after Biden <a href="#">announced nearly \$3bn in new military assistance to Ukraine</a>, including anti-aircraft missiles, artillery, counter-drone defences and radar equipment, the biggest tranche of US military aid to date.</li><li>• Vladimir Putin has signed a decree to increase the size of Russia’s armed forces from 1.9 million to 2.04 million, as the war in Ukraine enters its seventh month with no signs of abating. <a href="#">The Russian president’s decree</a> appears to point to the country’s aim to replenish its military, which has been heavily damaged in Ukraine and has failed to achieve its objective to capture the capital, Kyiv.</li><li>• <b>At least 25 people have been confirmed dead after a Russian rocket strike on a Ukrainian train station.</b> Russian forces attacked a train in the village of Chaplyne, Dnipropetrovsk oblast on Wednesday. The deputy head of the president’s office, Kyrilo Tymoshenko, reported on Telegram that <a href="#">two children were killed in the attack</a>. Russia has since <a href="#">confirmed it was behind the attack</a>.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The mayor of the Russian-occupied city of Melitopol, Ivan Fedorov, has said a building allegedly used by Russian-backed officials in the region has been “blown up”.</b> Fedorov, who is not in the city, <a href="#">posted a video reportedly showing damage to the building</a>, which he said was being used to plan a “pseudo-referendum” by Russia-backed authorities on whether the region should join Russia.</li> <li>• <b>The Vatican’s Russia-Ukraine diplomacy suffered two setbacks on Thursday</b> when the head of the Russian Orthodox church cancelled a meeting with Pope Francis and Ukraine summoned the papal ambassador to complain about Francis’ latest comments about the war. The pontiff upset Kyiv by including Darya Dugina, the daughter of Russian nationalist TV Alexander Dugin killed by a car bomb on Sunday, as among the “innocents” who have been victimised by the “insanity of war.” Russia has accused Ukrainian intelligence in the bombing, which Ukraine denies.</li> <li>• <b>Latvia <a href="#">toppled a Soviet-era obelisk</a> amid backlash against Russia.</b> The concrete nearly 80-metre (260ft) obelisk topped by Soviet stars was the centrepiece of a monument to the Red Army’s victory over Nazi Germany, the latest in a series of Soviet monuments brought down after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.</li> <li>• <b>UK opposition leader Keir Starmer is planning a trip to Ukraine in the coming months as he moves to cement his relations with Kyiv.</b> The Labour leader approached the government this summer about the possibility of a visit as opposition leader, with the Labour party writing <a href="#">a letter seen by the Guardian</a>.</li> </ul>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/26 Nuclear plant close call ‘radiation disaster’</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/26/zaporizhzhia-nuclear-power-plant-ukraine-russia-europe-radiation-disaster">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/26/zaporizhzhia-nuclear-power-plant-ukraine-russia-europe-radiation-disaster</a>
GIST	<p>Volodymyr Zelenskiy has said the world narrowly avoided a “radiation disaster” as the last regular line supplying electricity to Ukraine’s Russian-held Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant was restored hours after being cut by shelling.</p> <p>The Ukrainian president said officials from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the UN’s nuclear watchdog, must be given urgent access to the site.</p> <p>Zelenskiy blamed shelling on Thursday by Russia’s military for fires in the ash pits of a nearby coal power station that disconnected the reactor complex, Europe’s largest such facility, from the power grid. He said back-up diesel generators ensured power supply and kept the plant safe.</p> <p>“If our station staff had not reacted after the blackout, then we would have already been forced to overcome the consequences of a radiation accident,” he said in an evening address. “Russia has put Ukraine and all Europeans in a situation one step away from a radiation disaster.”</p> <p>IAEA officials should be given access to the site within days, he said, “before the occupiers take the situation to the point of no return”.</p> <p>Negotiations are under way for the UN’s nuclear watchdog to visit the site, and Ukraine’s top nuclear official told the Guardian that IAEA inspectors could arrive by the end of the month.</p> <p>Until then, continued fighting puts the plant, and potentially much of Europe, at risk. A nuclear accident could spread radiation far across the continent.</p> <p>Ukrainian state nuclear company Energoatom said Thursday’s incident represented the plant’s first complete disconnection in its nearly 40 years of operation. Electricity is used for cooling and safety systems.</p> <p>Russia, which invaded Ukraine in February, captured the plant in March and has controlled it since, although Ukrainian technicians still operate it.</p>

Russia and Ukraine have accused each other of shelling the site, fuelling fears of a nuclear disaster. The White House called on Russia to agree to a demilitarised zone around the plant, after Joe Biden spoke to Zelenskiy on Thursday.

The US state department also cautioned Russia against redirecting energy from the site.

“The electricity that it produces rightly belongs to Ukraine and any attempt to disconnect the plant from the Ukrainian power grid and redirect to occupied areas is unacceptable,” spokesman Vedant Patel told reporters. “No country should turn a nuclear power plant into an active war zone and we oppose any Russian efforts to weaponise or divert energy from the plant.”

The IAEA said Ukraine had informed it the plant temporarily lost connection, “further underlining the urgent need for an IAEA expert mission to travel to the facility”.

“We can’t afford to lose any more time. I’m determined to personally lead an IAEA mission to the plant in the next few days,” the organisation’s director general, Rafael Grossi, said.

Writing on Telegram, Vladimir Rogov, a Russian-appointed official in the occupied town of Enerhodar near the plant, said satellite photos showed the local forest in flames. He said towns in the area lost power for several hours on Thursday.

“This was caused by the disconnection of power lines from the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power station as a result of provocations by Zelenskiy’s fighters,” Rogov claimed. “The disconnection itself was triggered by a fire and short circuit on the power lines.”

Nuclear experts have warned of the risk of damage to the plant’s spent nuclear fuel pools or its reactors. Cuts in the power needed to cool the pools could cause a disastrous meltdown.

There have been growing international concerns about safety at Europe’s largest nuclear plant. It has been occupied by Russian forces since the start of the war, and they are now using it to house military vehicles and equipment.

The complex supplied more than 20% of Ukraine’s electricity needs and its loss would pile new strain on the government.

The head of Energoatom’s told the Guardian on Wednesday that Russian engineers had drawn up a blueprint to permanently disconnect the plant from the national grid and connect it to the Russian power network instead. Petro Kotin said the plan was ostensibly aimed at maintaining power supply to the plant if all connections to Ukraine were cut off by fighting, as they were on Thursday. But Ukraine fears Russia may deliberately cut the lines.

Russian and Ukrainian forces have reached a relative stalemate in recent months, partly after the west supplied new long-range missiles that have hampered Russia’s supply lines and ability to continue with its offensives. Ukraine says it also does not have the weapons it needs to launch a decisive counteroffensive.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/25 Shelling cuts nuclear plant off Ukraine grid</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/25/zaporizhzhia-nuclear-plant-disconnected-ukraine-grid-russia">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/25/zaporizhzhia-nuclear-plant-disconnected-ukraine-grid-russia</a>
GIST	Fires caused by shelling cut the last remaining power line to the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant on Thursday, temporarily disconnecting it from Ukraine’s national grid for the first time in nearly 40 years of operation, the country’s nuclear power firm, Energoatom, has said.



There have been growing international concerns about [safety at Europe's largest nuclear plant](#). It has been occupied by Russian forces since the start of the war, and they are now using it to house military vehicles and equipment.

The White House called on [Russia](#) to agree to a demilitarised zone around the plant, after the US president, Joe Biden, spoke to his Ukrainian counterpart, Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Biden congratulated him on the country's 31st Independence Day, celebrated on Wednesday, which was also the six-month mark since Russia invaded.

"I know it is a bittersweet anniversary, but I made it clear that the United States would continue to support Ukraine and its people as they fight to defend their sovereignty," Biden [tweeted](#) after the phone call.

Negotiations are under way for the UN's nuclear watchdog to visit the site, and Ukraine's top nuclear official told the Guardian that International Atomic [Energy](#) Agency (IAEA) inspectors could arrive by the end of the month.

Until then, continued fighting puts the plant, and potentially much of [Europe](#), at risk. A nuclear accident could spread radiation far across the continent.

The plant was disconnected twice from the Ukrainian grid on Thursday after a blaze at the ash pits of a nearby coal-fired power plant affected the fourth and last connection into the plant's reactors. Three other lines had already been taken out during the war.

"The actions of the invaders caused a complete disconnection of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant from the power grid – for the first time in the history of the plant," Energoatom said on Thursday.

The severing of that connection briefly caused a blackout in the Zaporizhzhia region, said Yevgeny Balitsky, the Russian-appointed governor for the area. Power has now been restored.

Disconnecting the plant from the grid is dangerous because it raises the risk of catastrophic failure of the electricity-run cooling systems for its reactors and spent fuel rods.

During the outage, the plant still received supplies of electricity from one remaining backup line connected to the nearby conventional power plant, Energoatom said. There were three of these lines before the war, but two have been cut.

If all external connections go down, it must rely on diesel-fuelled generators for power. If they break down, engineers only have 90 minutes to stave off dangerous overheating.

Zelenskyy claimed late on Thursday that the world narrowly avoided a radiation accident. "If the diesel generators had not turned on ... if our station staff had not reacted after the blackout, then we would have already been forced to overcome the consequences of a radiation accident," he said in an evening address.

"Russia has put Ukraine and all Europeans in a situation one step away from a radiation disaster." He called on the IAEA and other world bodies to act much faster to force Russian troops to leave the territory of the station.

The head of Energoatom's [told the Guardian](#) on Wednesday that Russian engineers had drawn up a blueprint to permanently disconnect the plant from the national grid and connect it to the Russian power network instead. Petro Kotin said the plan was ostensibly aimed at maintaining power supply to the plant if all connections to Ukraine were cut off by fighting, as they were on Thursday. But Ukraine fears Russia may deliberately cut the lines.



The latest crisis at the plant, which has previously been threatened by fires, came as the death toll from a Russian rocket attack on a railway station and village in south-central Dnipropetrovsk region rose to 25.

The three rocket strikes also injured 31, according to Ukraine's authorities. The area was hit on Independence Day – an anniversary overshadowed by US warnings that Russia may be planning to “step up” attacks.

Russia's defence ministry said its forces had successfully hit a military train, killing 200 Ukrainian soldiers. It said the train was set to deliver arms to the frontline in Ukraine's eastern Donbas region. It is impossible to corroborate the claims. Ukraine's authorities do not regularly share information about their military losses.

At least some of the victims appear to have been civilians. Pictures and footage of the aftermath aired by Ukraine's public broadcaster Suspilne showed at least one destroyed house in the village and extensive damage elsewhere. Those interviewed by Suspilne said fellow villagers had died.

Kyrylo Tymoshenko, an adviser to Ukraine's presidential office, said two children, aged six and 11, were killed, the latter when their house was destroyed. Zelenskiy said five people were killed while sitting in a car.

Tetyana Kvitnytska, the deputy director of health at the Dnipropetrovsk regional military administration, said four children were among the injured, three of whom were in a serious condition. She said there were shrapnel wounds, burns and fractures.

Only two pictures have been released so far of the railway carriages that were hit, which appear burnt out and flattened in places. Tymoshenko said five passenger carriages caught fire and a utility building at the railway station had been hit.

The EU's foreign affairs representative, Josep Borrell, wrote on Twitter: “The EU strongly condemns another terrible Russian attack on the civilian population in Chaplynyn on Ukraine's independence day. Those responsible for Russian missile terror will be held accountable.”

Russian and Ukrainian forces have reached a relative stalemate in recent months, partly after the west supplied new long-range missiles that have hampered Russia's supply lines and ability to continue with its offensives. Ukraine says it also does not have the weapons it needs to launch a decisive counteroffensive.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/25 Student loan forgiveness ups inflation risk?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/biden-student-loan-forgiveness-raises-inflation-budget-risks-11661457157?mod=hp_lead_pos1">https://www.wsj.com/articles/biden-student-loan-forgiveness-raises-inflation-budget-risks-11661457157?mod=hp_lead_pos1</a>
GIST	<p>President Biden's <a href="#">decision to cancel up to \$20,000 in student debt</a> for millions of borrowers will have broad economic consequences, including on inflation, consumer behavior and government budgets, though the degree of those effects is uncertain.</p> <p>Assuming <a href="#">the plan</a> survives <a href="#">any potential legal challenges</a>, the move to cancel a lump-sum of debt for more than 40 million borrowers and change repayment rules could provide a modest boost to longer-term inflation and lead to larger federal deficits, economists say.</p> <p>In the short term, some, such as Obama administration economist Jason Furman say the debt relief risks “pouring roughly half trillion dollars of gasoline on the inflationary fire.” In contrast, Wall Street analysts say the near-term impact is likely to be limited because debt relief isn't like other forms of stimulus. Individuals won't immediately have more money to spend because almost all borrowers haven't been paying during <a href="#">a government repayment moratorium</a> during the Covid-19 's pandemic.</p>

“You are already receiving forbearance from your student loan payments, so your disposable income isn’t necessarily going to go up relative to where it is now,” said Michael Gapen, head of U.S. Economics Research at Bank of America. “Will we see it in the statistics in the next six months? Probably not,” Mr. Gapen said.

If all borrowers who are eligible for debt cancellation enroll, student loan balances will be reduced by around \$400 billion, according to a Goldman Sachs analysis released Thursday. Their economists found that student loan payments would fall from 0.4% of personal income to 0.3%. Debt cancellation isn’t likely to have much of an effect on inflation, they found, writing that “debt forgiveness that lowers monthly payments is slightly inflationary in isolation, but the resumption of payments is likely to more than offset this.”

Mr. Biden, a Democrat, also announced that borrowers with remaining balances must prepare to [resume paying starting in January](#) after nearly three years of the pandemic-related freeze.

Republicans immediately tied the debt cancellation to risks of higher inflation. “Biden’s student loan forgiveness plan may win Democrats some votes, but it fuels inflation, foots taxpayers with other people’s financial obligations, [and] is unfair to those who paid their own way,” Sen. Mitt Romney (R., Utah) said Wednesday.

The plan’s impact on inflation was a central concern for Mr. Biden and his advisers in recent months, as the president’s approval ratings were dragged down by mounting public frustration this year with higher consumer prices, according to administration officials and others familiar with the internal discussions.

Earlier this year, some in the administration thought Mr. Biden might not move forward with loan forgiveness because of the expected political backlash, some of the people said. The president signaled he was prepared to weather the criticism, the people said.

Mr. Biden instructed his aides to examine the possible fallout of the plan on the deficit and inflation. He was presented with modeling that eventually eased his concerns, the people said. Aides told the president that the overall effect on inflation would be neutral or even deflationary if they paired targeted forgiveness with a resumption of loan payments within a few months. The payments, they argued, would offset the potential inflationary effect of a surge in demand that might come after borrowers received debt relief.

Some analysts disagreed with the administration’s analysis.

“The argument is both bogus and mathematically wrong,” said Marc Goldwein, senior policy director for the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, a nonpartisan think tank. He noted that even the 23 million borrowers with remaining balances will get the benefit of four more months of deferred payments and will pay less on their loans going forward, both of which are likely to boost their consumption and contribute to inflation.

Other economists see less immediate effects.

“It would probably take several quarters or more” for personal spending to meaningfully accelerate, Mr. Gapen said. The effect of that increased consumption would likely be “well-within the margins of predicting GDP growth or inflation over time,” he said.

In addition to debt cancellation, Mr. Biden’s plan also would change how borrowers will pay off their loans in the future by adjusting income-based repayment programs to require lower payments and capping interest, especially for lower-income borrowers.

The changes, along with the extra relief for Pell Grant recipients, likely makes the plan more targeted to lower-income borrowers than some economists feared. Without such policies, student debt relief would skew toward wealthier people who are more likely to pursue an advanced degree than the average

	<p>American. But it also makes the plan more expensive than if Pell Grant recipients received the same \$10,000 in relief as other borrowers.</p> <p>The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget found that the total cost of student loan relief would be around \$500 billion over 10 years, including \$360 billion in canceled debt, \$120 billion from the changes to repayment plans, and \$20 billion from another four-month extension to the payment pause. It will likely knock out the deficit-shrinking benefits of the Inflation Reduction Act, which Democrats pushed through Congress earlier this month, CRFB found. Over time, as loans don't get repaid, the federal government will lose money that might otherwise have been paid back.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/25 Backlash grows over 'quiet quitting'</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-backlash-against-quiet-quitting-is-getting-loud-11661391232?mod=hp_lead_pos13">https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-backlash-against-quiet-quitting-is-getting-loud-11661391232?mod=hp_lead_pos13</a>
GIST	<p>People have serious opinions about not taking your job too seriously.</p> <p>The viral term "<a href="#">quiet quitting</a>" isn't really about quitting, nor is there anything quiet about the debate it has unleashed about careers and coasting this summer. What started as a quiet movement among office workers looking to draw firmer work-life boundaries <a href="#">after two years of pandemic overtime</a> has grown into a rallying cry.</p> <p>Of course, every generation of workers has had its anti-work philosophies and many managers and striving colleagues have always taken issue with them. Cue the quiet-quitting backlash: The concept has sparked a flood of vehement commentary from business leaders, career coaches and other professionals lamenting what the shift away from hustle culture means for Americans' commitment to their jobs, while some young professionals are praising it.</p> <p>"Quiet quitting isn't just about quitting on a job, it's a step toward quitting on life," wrote Arianna Huffington, founder of health and wellness startup Thrive Global, in a <a href="#">Linkedln post</a> that has garnered thousands of reactions. Kevin O'Leary, co-star on ABC's "Shark Tank" and chairman of O'Shares ETFs, called quiet quitting a horrible approach to building a career: "You have to go beyond because you want to. That's how you achieve success," he said <a href="#">in a CNBC video essay</a>.</p> <p>How quiet quitting's advocates and critics react depends on what they think the phrase means—and interpretations vary wildly. Some professionals argue the concept is saying no to extra work without extra pay and work stress, not necessarily phoning it in. Many detractors say the quiet quitting mind-set fosters laziness and hurts performance, even if baseline job expectations are being met.</p> <p>Quiet quitters may think they're preventing or curing burnout by doing less work, but better options exist, Ms. Huffington said in an interview. Coasting through your career instead of finding truly engaging work is a missed opportunity, especially when you could find more meaningful work in today's hot job market, she added.</p> <p>"As an employer, I really love when people in interviews say, 'I give 100% when I'm working, and these are my boundaries.' That's very different from, 'I do the bare minimum to get by,'" she said.</p> <p>While some bosses push back against quiet quitting, saying that going above and beyond is the best way to get noticed, get raises and climb the corporate ladder, many workers are heaping scorn on the term itself, calling out the irony of doing a 9-to-5 job and calling it quitting.</p> <p>Kristin Hancock, an Indianapolis-based communications professional, said that for her quiet quitting is a futile pursuit. There have been times in her career when she was dissatisfied with a job and wanted to coast, but she found herself unable to do so. Doing less felt frustrating and made her work feel even less meaningful.</p>

“For people who are like me, the only other option is leaving,” she said. Ms. Hancock now runs a communications startup and is her own boss, a setup that she says allows her to reap the full rewards of her work.

Others say those who embrace quiet quitting could be selling themselves short. What some quiet quitters call doing the bare minimum actually means giving full-attention to their work, then having a life outside work hours, says Brian Gray, who works in web development.

After receiving a “meets expectations” score on a performance review at a past job—at which he regularly accepted last-minute requests to stay late at work and offered to take on extra tasks—Mr. Gray says he decided to stop chasing validation from his bosses by going above and beyond.

“You’re not coasting,” he said. “You are doing precisely the right amount of work.”

Who has the political leverage in the office to quietly quit is also up for debate. Mercedes Swan, a human resources manager and career coach, says the strategy may not work for a lot of people of color. Because of negative stereotypes, Black women especially could experience backlash if they decide to step back or set firmer boundaries.

“It’s going to look like we’re doing less work over time when, actually, we are just performing at a level that everyone else typically is,” she said, adding that from a performance standpoint, people of color can also experience stronger penalties.

Some critics say they fear quiet quitting is corrosive to workplace cultures—and the bottom line—because it’s demoralizing to efficient workers to see others phoning it in without penalty.

“It’s not about the quiet quitters. It’s about everybody else and the unfairness that occurs there,” said Amy Mosher, chief people officer at human resources software company isolved. If quiet quitting leads to performance issues, she said, those workers should be let go to find jobs that truly engage them.

Jay McDonald, an Atlanta-based executive coach and former CEO of several small companies, says the onus is on business leaders to set clear performance expectations. If employees are meeting them, that’s what matters, not when or how long they work, he says.

“You have a responsibility to have good metrics and measurements for knowing whether somebody’s getting the job done or not,” he says.

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HEADLINE	08/25 DSA: Seattle’s hotel industry on rebound
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/seattle/downtown-seattle-hotels-occupancy-nearing-pre-pandemic-levels/281-fffc5a41-8145-46f4-a375-f90384c34158">https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/seattle/downtown-seattle-hotels-occupancy-nearing-pre-pandemic-levels/281-fffc5a41-8145-46f4-a375-f90384c34158</a>
GIST	<p>SEATTLE — New data from the <a href="#">Downtown Seattle Association</a> shows downtown hotels are making a major comeback, with some closing in on pre-pandemic occupancy levels right now.</p> <p>"We went from being one of the bottom five in the country to the top five," said Craig Schafer, the owner of <a href="#">Hotel Andra</a> located in downtown Seattle on the corner of Fourth and Virginia.</p> <p>Schafer said the past three years have been difficult for the hospitality industry, but Schafer said they've taken a step forward in the last couple months.</p> <p>"It went from devastating and dark, to reemerging this spring and summer, beyond a lot of people's expectations," said Schafer.</p> <p>According to a <a href="#">new report</a> from the Downtown Seattle Association (DSA), downtown welcomed more than 2.9 million visitors last month, which is the highest total since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>

	<p>The report also shows demand for hotel rooms is the highest it's been since 2019. With demand for hotel rooms downtown last month reaching 94% of 2019 levels and 96% in June.</p> <p>"It's refreshing compared to the last two years and we still have a ways to go," said Schafer. Schafer acknowledges the numbers may take a slight step back as we enter fall. But he's still grateful for the strides the industry has made to get back on its feet and is optimistic tourism will see another boost with companies beginning to travel and conventions reconvening in downtown.</p> <p>"It's up and up, we'll go through the year and just hope that we don't have any setbacks," said Schafer. The DSA report also pointed out that hotel revenue on Saturday, July 16 was the third-highest revenue day in Seattle's history at \$4.3 million.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/25 School districts face bus driver shortages</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/students-return-class-local-school-districts-dealing-with-bus-driver-shortages/TOBDHFRBENHKXC5ZWVNHCGMIPQ/">https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/students-return-class-local-school-districts-dealing-with-bus-driver-shortages/TOBDHFRBENHKXC5ZWVNHCGMIPQ/</a>
GIST	<p>As school swings back into session, districts nationwide and across the state are dealing with major bus driver shortages.</p> <p>The good news is that hiring is up. The bad news — a lot of school districts are either barely covering their routes, or still extremely short.</p> <p>It's a profession, but it's sought out by those with a passion.</p> <p>"You develop that relationship and then you see them out in the community and they recognize you, 'Hey Miss Anne!'" said Anne Panesko, a driver with the North Thurston School District. "I love it, to see the positive impact that we can have on children."</p> <p>Then COVID came, spurring a myriad of issues as classes went online and drivers went home, jobless.</p> <p>"The pandemic definitely threw a huge wrench into the entire industry," said Jamie Fleming, director of communication and research for Teamsters Local 174, the union representing roughly 400 school bus drivers around the Puget Sound. "You had this whole group of professional drivers that didn't have a job to do for a year or two years, so many of them moved onto something else or retired from driving. So when school went back to being in-person, the pool of available drivers had shrunk dramatically."</p> <p>First Student, a company contracted by Seattle Public Schools to provide drivers, did what other private businesses and school districts had to do to try to recover — upping wages and benefits, offering incentives and bonuses, even changing licensing requirements and streamlining the application process to attract new drivers.</p> <p>"Over the course of the last year, two years, the wages for our drivers have gone up, up, and up and up, and that's just mainly because the companies had no choice but to raise the wages because they weren't able to recruit," Fleming said.</p> <p>Even still, a new Education Week survey finds 68% of school districts are having a hard time hiring enough bus drivers.</p> <p>HopSkipDrive's 2022 State of School Transportation report blames the recovery lull on continued recruiting issues, pay, retirement, COVID concerns, and the loss of qualified drivers to the private sector.</p> <p>In turn, 44% of schools nationwide say they've had to reduce the transportation services they offer.</p>

	<p>Districts in Washington are no different. Compared to last year, things are better, but they're still not great.</p> <p>At the beginning of the 2021 school year, 15 of 19 school districts KIRO 7 talked to said they needed drivers badly.</p> <p>This year, we reached out to those same districts to compare. Four reported full staffing, minus a few substitutes.</p> <p>But 11 others are still struggling to bring drivers on board. For some, the need is manageable, but for others, it's a bit tougher.</p> <p>Despite every district telling KIRO 7 they are actively hiring and offering incentives, it's been a slow ride — and you may feel some bumps along the way.</p> <p>The most popular solutions include staggering bell schedules, consolidating or doubling routes, using other school employees to drive, and encouraging parents to find other transport. Some schools have even expanded walk boundaries to reduce the load.</p> <p>All have left canceled routes as a very last resort, but unfortunately, it's a route SPS has already had to take — the district has announced that some families will not have bus service at the start of the year.</p> <p>Teamsters Local 174 says for SPS in particular, the staffing issues can be blamed on a decision to split their bus driver contract between two companies — one it has used for 30 years, First Student, and one that is brand new to the area called Zoom.</p> <p>"Seattle school district set them up to fail, really," said Fleming.</p> <p>SPS says it will notify families affected by those canceled routes by Sept. 7.</p> <p>As for other districts — you probably won't be without a bus, but the one you get may be very full, the schedule may be very tight, and your child may be picked up or dropped off late or early.</p> <p>"Drivers themselves are looking forward to, hopefully, a good school year, we just expect that the first few weeks will probably be rocky," said Fleming. "Then again, they always are."</p> <p>If you still haven't received your child's bus schedule, a number of districts tell KIRO 7 that you'll still get them before school starts and to keep checking your district's website.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/26 US: 21 Russia detention sites Donetsk area</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/08/26/world/ukraine-russia-war-news#the-us-state-department-and-yale-identify-21-detention-sites-in-russian-controlled-territory">https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/08/26/world/ukraine-russia-war-news#the-us-state-department-and-yale-identify-21-detention-sites-in-russian-controlled-territory</a>
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON — The U.S. State Department and Yale University researchers said Thursday that they had identified <a href="#">at least 21 sites</a> in the Donetsk region of eastern Ukraine that the Russian military or Russian-backed Ukrainian separatists are using to detain, interrogate or deport civilians and prisoners of war in ways that violate international humanitarian law. There were signs pointing to possible mass graves in some areas, they said.</p> <p>Researchers at the Yale School of Public Health's Humanitarian Research Lab said the sites were part of a "filtration system" used for processing detainees and prisoners. They reached their conclusions after examining commercial satellite imagery and open-source information. The detainees and prisoners could be forced to live outside the centers in Russian-occupied areas of Ukraine, imprisoned for long periods, deported to Russia or even killed.</p>



The research was a collaboration between Yale and the [Conflict Observatory program](#) that the State Department set up in May to document war crimes and other atrocities committed by Russian or Russian-backed forces in the Ukraine war. The researchers released their findings through a report from Conflict Observatory.

“We again call on Russia to immediately halt its filtration operations and forced deportations and to provide outside independent observers access to identified facilities and forced deportation relocation areas within Russia-controlled areas of Ukraine and inside Russia itself,” the State Department said in a statement referring to the new findings.

The report identified four types of centers in the filtration system: registration, holding, secondary interrogation and detention.

The researchers also found evidence of disturbed earth on two recent occasions at the Volnovakha “correctional colony” near the village of Olenivka that they said was consistent with mass graves. The appearance of disturbed earth predated an explosion on July 29 at the prison compound that killed 53 Ukrainian prisoners of war.

One area of disturbed earth appeared in imagery from April 11 — “contemporaneous with an open source account of alleged gravedigging,” the report said, referring to an online account in which a former inmate discussed a cellmate working a shift digging graves. A second area of disturbed earth appeared on July 27, two days before the explosion.

A [New York Times analysis](#) from early August of images from Maxar Technologies and Planet Labs, two satellite imaging companies, concluded that some time after July 18 and before July 21, about 15 to 20 spots of notable changes to the ground appeared on the southern side of the complex. They were about 6 to 7 feet wide and 10 to 16 feet long at first, and some later appeared to have been lengthened to merge. It was unclear whether they were grave sites.

The Conflict Observatory report said the Volnovakha center was being used as a long-term detention center for civilians being kept under the auspices of “administrative detention” and for holding prisoners of war, particularly Ukrainians who surrendered after the siege of Azovstal, in the coastal city of Mariupol. “Filtration” activities appear to have begun there in late March and have continued since then.

The researchers noted that there had been reports of torture, beatings, lack of water and proper nutrition, unhygienic conditions and overcrowded cells at the compound.

The State Department said it was giving an additional \$9 million to the Conflict Observatory through the European Democratic Resilience Initiative.

“This focus on accountability lays the foundation for future civil and criminal legal processes, whether in Ukraine, through international mechanisms, or in third-party countries that have established jurisdiction,” it said.

“President Putin and his government will not be able to engage in these persistent abuses with impunity,” the department added. “Accountability is imperative, and the United States and our partners will not be silent.”

In June, the U.S. National Intelligence Council [released an unclassified report](#) that said it had identified 18 possible locations in Russian-occupied eastern Ukraine and western Russia where detainees and prisoners were being held and processed.

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HEADLINE	08/25 Putin orders sharp increase Russia military
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/25/world/europe/putin-russia-military-expansion.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/25/world/europe/putin-russia-military-expansion.html</a>



President Vladimir V. Putin on Thursday ordered a sharp increase in the size of Russia's armed forces, a reversal of years of efforts by the Kremlin to slim down a bloated military and the latest sign that he is bracing for a long war in Ukraine, where Russia has suffered heavy losses.

The decree, stamped by the president's office and posted on the Kremlin website, raised the target number of active-duty service members by about 137,000, to 1.15 million, as of January of next year, and ordered the government to set aside money to pay for the increase.

It was the first time in five years that Mr. Putin had issued an order changing the overall head count of the Russian armed forces. Officials offered no explanation for the move, and there was little mention of it on state television.

Mr. Putin acted at a time when he appears as far as ever from his goal of bringing all or most of Ukraine back into the Russian fold, and as his military is struggling with its manpower. American officials said Mr. Putin's decision is a signal about just how acute those problems remain. Since his invasion began in February, U.S. and British military officials estimate, [Russia has suffered up to 80,000 casualties](#), including both deaths and injuries. Those losses and the lack of movement at the front led some analysts to describe the order as a signal that, after six months of fighting, Mr. Putin had no plans to relent.

"This is not a move that you make when you are anticipating a rapid end to your war," said Dara Massicot, a senior policy researcher at the RAND Corporation. "This is something you do when you are making some kind of plan for a protracted conflict."

Still, military analysts puzzled over how the Russian military, without a major draft and having already [tried to tempt and strong-arm potential volunteers](#), would manage the task of increasing its ranks so sharply.

There is mounting evidence that the war in Ukraine could stretch to next winter and beyond. Russia's offensives in the east and south have slowed to a crawl and neither side has shown any readiness to negotiate or compromise. In Ukraine, a top security official recently warned that the war's hardest days may still lie ahead.

"It's going to be very difficult; it's not going to be easy," the official, Oleksiy Danilov, who heads the National Security and Defense Council, said in an interview with Radio Liberty, a U.S.-funded independent news organization. "And if someone thinks that we have already passed some kind of Rubicon and that the rest will be like clockwork, unfortunately, it will not be."

Looking ahead, Ukraine's leaders have tried to keep their Western backers unified — and sending weapons and money — and on Thursday President Biden [reaffirmed](#) his support in a call with President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine, White House officials said in a statement. But Mr. Zelensky's military has not regained significant territory in recent weeks, despite [a series of high-profile strikes](#) far behind enemy lines.

The Russian Ministry of Defense has said that it was slowing the pace of its military campaign — a reflection, Western military analysts say, of the Kremlin's need to explain the lack of military progress at home after going weeks without gaining significant new ground.

But Moscow continues to rain rocket strikes around Ukraine, including on Wednesday, when [two dozen people were killed in an attack on a train station](#) in the east. And U.S. officials have warned that Moscow may soon try to stage sham referendums in Russian-occupied regions, like [the one held in Crimea in 2014](#), that are designed to provide a veil of legitimacy as Moscow moves to seal its control, through either annexation or propping up proxy forces.

Mr. Putin said this month that his troops were "liberating" eastern Ukraine "step by step," even as pro-war commentators in Russia have been urging him to escalate the intensity of the fighting, and mobilize more of the country's resources to do it.

The calls for escalation grew louder this week after the car bombing outside Moscow that [killed Daria Dugina](#), an ultranationalist commentator, and Ukrainian sabotage and drone attacks well behind the front line in Crimea, the Ukrainian peninsula that Russia illegally annexed in 2014.

Amid those demands for aggressive action and the Kremlin's insistence that the fighting is going according to plan, analysts have been struggling to game out Mr. Putin's next move: Is he preparing to increase the intensity of the campaign, maintain it at its current pace, or look for a way to end the war?

Most Russia analysts acknowledge that trying to predict Mr. Putin, a former Soviet K.G.B. officer who spent most of the [pandemic cloistered even](#) from his closest advisers, is a speculative challenge that rarely involves much evidence to assess. But Thursday's decree about expanding the size of the army suggested that Mr. Putin was prepared to continue the war, though it was unclear how the military would achieve his goal.

"It's a troubling announcement," Ms. Massicot said, "but I question their ability to see it through."

Under Mr. Putin, officials have tried to transform the Russian Army from a Soviet-era military reliant on conscripts to a professional fighting force more akin to Western militaries. The Defense Ministry worked for years to recruit contract soldiers, while reducing the length of required military service for men ages 18 to 27, to one year.

The Kremlin has insisted that only contract soldiers and volunteers are part of the Russian force fighting in Ukraine, continuing to refer to the war as only a "special military operation." Men from occupied areas of Ukraine have been pressed into service, however, and reports have emerged of Russian conscripts being sent to the front.

"The order in my view does not necessarily presage a larger draft, or greater mobilization," Michael Kofman, the director of Russian studies at C.N.A., a research institute in Arlington, Va., [said](#) on Twitter. "It could, but it may be a way of accommodating the various current recruitment efforts."

The Kremlin may plan to fold into its military the Russian proxy forces of the self-declared, breakaway republics in eastern Ukraine, he added, "especially if they go through with annexation" of those regions.

Mr. Putin has not declared any kind of large-scale draft, despite frequent predictions from analysts and Western officials that he would have to make such a move in order to replace soldiers who are killed and injured.

Instead, the Russian authorities have been [luring people to enlist by offering them hefty cash incentives](#) and other perquisites. They have recruited Syrian fighters and mercenaries to join the combat in Ukraine. And in May, Mr. Putin signed a law that scrapped the age limit of 40 for new recruits.

Analysts said that Mr. Putin's decree enlarging the army did not necessarily augur a new draft — something that the Kremlin has apparently tried to avoid in order to maintain [a sense of normalcy](#) for much of Russia's population. Instead, they said, the military could increase the number of young men who are conscripted at any given time for their mandatory year of service, or lengthen the duration of that service.

Some also speculated that the decree could be laying the bureaucratic and budgetary groundwork for incorporating other forces into the military — such as the battalions of "volunteers," now fighting in Ukraine, from Chechnya and other Russian regions.

Pavel Luzin, a Russian military analyst, said the military expansion decreed by Mr. Putin on Thursday would bring the targeted size of the force back to levels last seen in the early 2000s, when Russian soldiers were [fighting a second war](#) in Chechnya.

	<p>Given Russia’s shrinking population and the ravages of the war, he added, it was hard to imagine enough conscripts and recruits being assembled to meet the target laid out in the order.</p> <p>“The Russian army in today’s conditions can never be a million-man army,” Mr. Luzin wrote. “Especially with gigantic losses and mass departures in conditions of war.”</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/26 National Dog Day: canine heroes</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.hstoday.us/featured/celebrating-our-canine-heroes-on-international-dog-day/">https://www.hstoday.us/featured/celebrating-our-canine-heroes-on-international-dog-day/</a>
GIST	<p>Happy National Dog Day!</p> <p>Where would we be without our four-legged friends who provide help and support to us in so many ways? Whether they are fighting crime, sniffing out explosives or narcotics, rescuing people in distress, providing physical and emotional support, or just keeping us company as we sign executive orders or write news stories, dogs are truly our best friend.</p> <p><b>Saving lives on the frontline</b></p> <p>Earlier this year, a small but mighty Jack Russell terrier hit the headlines for performing an extraordinary service to the people of Ukraine. Patron, who works with his owner and handler Mykhailo Iliev for the State Emergency Service of Ukraine, has been sniffing out deadly explosive devices left by Russian troops and has already found hundreds. Patron is a well-decorated dog. The mascot of the International Coordination Center for Humanitarian Demining in Ukraine, he and Iliev were honored in May by Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskyy, and Canadian prime minister Justin Trudeau with the Order for Courage, Third Class for services to Ukraine. He was then also awarded Palm Dog for “DogManitarian Work” at the 2022 Cannes Film Festival.</p> <p><i>Homeland Security Today’s</i> own team mascot and sponsor dog, Cambodia-based Gizmo, is in a very similar line of work to Patron. Gizmo is a technical survey dog with <a href="#">APOPO</a>, which is perhaps best known for mine detection rats. Faster than metal detectors, a single technical survey dog (known at APOPO as a HeroDOG) can effectively survey an area of up to 4000m2 per day across challenging terrain with thick vegetation. Gizmo and her fellow HeroDOGS are trained to indicate when they find the smell of explosives from a safe distance away.</p> <p>Each dog is equipped with the Swiss developed SMART system – a backpack with Global Positioning System (GPS), a speaker and a video camera, that shows and records the dog’s search pattern and location. This allows the handler to instruct the dog through verbal command. When the dog finds an explosive item, the dogs are trained to sit down at a distance of at least one meter and wait patiently for their handler’s next command. This distance keeps the dogs safely out of harm’s way. The system generates maps with the survey progress and all the findings, which allows for better evidence-based decision-making on which areas will be released and which need to be cleared.</p> <p><b>Protecting the homeland</b></p> <p>In the United States, at borders and across transportation systems, dogs are sniffing for explosives on a daily basis. U.S. Customs and Border Protection’s (CBP) Canine Program has more than 1,500 canine teams alone, making it the largest and most diverse law enforcement canine program in the country. CBP canines have had several successes this year already. In May for example, a Uvalde Border Patrol canine team rescued 20 migrants locked inside a car hauler with no means of escape. At the time of the encounter, the temperature was 81 degrees. And they are adept at finding explosives and narcotics in all sorts of places.</p> <p>Those thinking they can outsmart a detection dog should think again. In April, a Border Patrol canine alerted to a vehicle which had four spare tires located in the bed of the truck. An in-depth inspection revealed numerous packages containing methamphetamine fentanyl inside the tires. And just last month near Campo, a vehicle search following a canine alert resulted in the discovery of multiple bundles of fentanyl concealed within the vehicle’s spare tire and gas tank.</p>

CBP also trains and uses agriculture detector dogs under a separate program. CBP often recruits young dogs from rescues for its agricultural program. They complete training where they learn to discern odors and most graduate to be placed at ports of entry. Last year, CBP agriculture canines detected 120,269 prohibited items at CBP Ports of Entry across the country, and 96,450 items through June this year. Earlier this month, CBP agriculture canine Harrie alerted to the baggage of a student arriving from Kenya whose mother sent him off to school with nearly 15 pounds of vegetables, and on August 1, Harrie alerted to the baggage of another traveler from Bangladesh. Inside his baggage CBP agriculture specialists discovered about 19 pounds of prohibited beef, pork, and fruit.

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) also has a strong canine team, which it can even deploy outside transportation hubs as required, such as at large events like the Super Bowl and Presidential inaugurations to assist the hard working canine teams of law enforcement departments all round the United States. The TSA National Explosives Detection Canine Program trains and deploys both TSA-led and state and local law enforcement-led canine teams in support of day-to-day activities that protect the transportation domain. There are more than 1,000 TSA canine teams deployed nationwide that are tasked with screening passengers and cargo, and supporting other security missions.

Standing beside every good dog is a good human, their best pal and very often their working partner too. That's truly the case for David Seamands and his dog, Hhilbert. Seamands was announced in March to be TSA's Canine Handler of the Year. Dogs have been a big part of Seamands' life for nearly three decades. They've worked together around-the-clock to protect the public, from the time Seamands was in the U.S. Army until now at Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport. Seamands' won the award with TSA canine Hhilbert, who is named in honor of U.S. Army Cpl. Thomas Layton Hilbert from Venus, Texas, who gave the ultimate sacrifice to this great nation on Sept. 7, 2007, when he lost his life in a roadside bombing in Afghanistan.

When Seamands was presented with the award he said the award was more for Hhilbert. "This award is more for him than for me," Seamands emphasized. "Hhilbert is just plain amazing. Our partners don't call in sick. Going through the motions in our line of work isn't allowed. It must be good, quality work." Seamands said Hhilbert, who has since retired, continued Cpl. Hilbert's legacy of protecting and fighting for safety and freedom. "It was an honor to work with a partner who had the shoulders to carry this heavy weight. That is a lot to live up to, and I can attest that Hhilbert did that every day of his career." After becoming a canine handler in 1993 while in the Army, Seamands joined TSA as a canine handler in 2012, partnering with Hhilbert for nearly 10 years and now working with his new canine, Luger. However, Hhilbert is still with him in retirement since he hung up his TSA harness in December.

Most working canines tend to retire with their handlers, like Hhilbert, who is now putting his paws up and munching snacks with Seamands. However, sometimes this is not possible. This summer for the first time in history, TSA partnered with an outside organization to find an adoptive family for a retiring canine. TSA Headquarters Canine Coordinator Andrew Hotinger reached out to Jason Johnson, the founder of [Project K-9 Hero](#), to see if Johnson's nonprofit group could find Rex, a Washington state-based german shorthaired pointer, a permanent home. Project K-9 Hero's vision is to ensure the best quality of life for America's retired military and police canine heroes by assisting with medical costs, food, rehabilitation, adoption and end of duty services. A great new home was quickly found for Rex and Hotinger believes this could be the start of a long partnership between TSA and Project K-9 Hero and extend the mission of TSA's canine program.

At the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), canine search teams play a critical role in supporting local and state response efforts with the capability to locate disaster survivors as well as human remains.

Dogs can detect live human scent, even if a survivor is buried deep in rubble. FEMA has close to 300 canine search teams that specialize in searching for survivors and almost 100 teams that specialize in searching for human remains.

### **A dog nose best**

As any working canine handler will tell you, a dog's nose is legendary. Indeed, anyone with a pet dog will know they can sniff out a BBQ from 40 blocks away, or that tiny crumb of cheese on someone else's picnic blanket... and as well as explosives, narcotics and people, they can also smell disease. Yet another way in which dogs help us. [Medical Detection Dogs](#) trains dogs to detect the odor of human disease including cancer, Parkinson's disease and bacterial infections. The dogs find the odor of those diseases in samples such as urine, breath and sweat. They can be used as medical alert dogs, detecting minute changes in a person's odor and alerting them to an impending medical event, as well as detection dogs in public settings. The COVID-19 infection for example has a distinct smell, which specially trained dogs can rapidly, non-invasively detect with up to 94.3% sensitivity and up to 92% specificity.

In a trial, the Medical Detection Dogs were able to detect odor from individuals who were asymptomatic, as well as those with two different strains, and with both high and low viral loads. The trial found that two dogs could reliably screen 300 plane passengers in around 30 minutes as part of a 'Rapid Screen and Test' strategy.

### **Old dog, new tricks**

The saying 'you can't teach an old dog new tricks' could not be further from the truth when talking about the [Throw Away Dogs Project](#). The non-profit's mission is to rescue high driven dogs, train them and then donate them to law enforcement departments around the Philadelphia region that cannot afford one. The goal one day is to be known around the country and be able to rescue, train and transport these dogs all over the map. The project follows through with every dog from start to finish. Not all dogs will make it through canine school and the project will then find a perfect loving family for that dog that will love and treat them like part of their family.

It was through the Throw Away Dogs Project that one of the nation's most unique human-canine teams was formed. The human half of this pawesome partnership, Millville Fire Department firefighter Tyler Van Leer, explains how he came to meet Hansel, the super social pit bull terrier with a nose for crime: "Hansel was donated to the Millville Fire Department by the Throw Away Dogs Project. He was born in Ontario, Canada. Unfortunately, he along with many other dogs were born into an alleged dog fighting ring. Hansel never fought. A rescue called Dog Tales Rescue and Sanctuary rescued 21 pit bull terriers, later to be known as #savethe21. After two years fighting in Ontario courts, the judge ordered the dogs out of Ontario. Hansel then made his way to Florida to a rescue called Dogs Playing for Life, where, because of his high energy and willingness to work, he was tested for a possible working dog position. The founder of the rescue, Aimee Sadler was close friends with Carol Skaziak who is the founder of the Throw Away Dogs Project, and Carol accepted Hansel into her Pitbulls for Police program."

But Hansel had a different calling to most canine officers. Firefighter Van Leer had always been interested in pursuing a career in fire investigation and thought that having a resource such as an ignitable liquid detection canine would be an awesome tool to have.

"I pitched the idea to my Chief, about adding a working dog to the ranks of the Fire Department and he said 'let's do this'," Van Leer recalls. "Like any new handler I had no idea where to start. My good friend John Butschky is a canine handler for the police department where I live and he put me in touch with Carol at the Throw Away Dogs Project. We arranged a meet and greet at the Fire Department and the moment Hansel and I met eyes it was an instant bond."

Hansel graduated his scent training with Van Leer in January 2020 and now works as an arson detection dog, sniffing out ignitable liquids like kerosene and lighter fluid. The certified team are inseparable.

"Hansel comes to work with me every day Monday through Friday and we are on call 24/7. I deploy Hansel after every fire to rule out the possibility of ignitable liquids on the scene. Before I put Hansel in a house I conduct a scene survey and look for anything that could possibly hurt him. If the structure is too unstable or there are too many holes in the floor, I will not deploy him."



Van Leer says Hansel is the best decision he ever made. “I couldn’t ask for a better canine partner”. We think the feeling is mutual, just look at Hansel’s grin!

More and more police departments and security agencies are finding that quite often, dogs who don’t find the right fit as a family pet are perfect at search and rescue, detection or protection work. These dogs are often born to do a job and we just need to help them to find what that job is, whether it’s being a child’s best friend or being the one to bring down an international drug cartel.

When their job is done, what happens to service dogs when they retire? As the TSA stories above show, they are not forgotten when they have worked their last day. And in July, Coast Guard Mutual Assistance (CGMA) – the official aid society for the United States Coast Guard – announced a new program to support Coast Guard working dogs in their retirement. The Retired Working Animal Medical Expenses Grant (WAG) will cover veterinary care insurance costs and cremation for retiring Coast Guard working animals.

Coast Guard working dogs are well-trained and mission ready. However when they retire, service canines are not entitled to any further financial support from the Coast Guard. Currently there are 18 working dogs, supporting the mission around the Coast Guard. The WAG program was launched through the generous patronage of Ms. Maureen Manning, daughter of Rear Admiral Alfred P. and Claire Manning. Describing her commitment to the mission of the new program, Ms Manning said, “All members for our service deserve to be taken care of and that includes the four-footed ones.” She gave the gift in memory of her parents and her own dog Sandy.

### **Fighting crime hand in paw**

Every hero dog needs their own hero. Regular readers of *Homeland Security Today* may remember Brady Snakovsky who won our Citizen of Mission award in 2019 for his commitment to protect canine officers. When he was only eight years old, Brady realized there was a need for all law enforcement canines to have their own protective vest and so he started fundraising. His aim was to buy one vest and now, as of August 2022, [Brady’s K9 Fund](#) has vested a phenomenal 660 brave police dogs, keeping them safe as they work to keep us safe. The mission is to provide every working dog in America with a lightweight ballistic vest. Brady’s K9 Fund sources the vests from Line Of Fire Defence which is kind enough to give the charity the law enforcement cost which allows more to be donated.

Brady is supported by a team of like-minded heroes, most notably his mom and fund president, Leah Tornabene, who told us that Brady is still very much involved with the charity despite other demands on his time, not least school, and that he has been coming up with ideas and keeping an eye on finances.

Leah said that the fund currently has a waiting list of 52 dogs in need of vests, which is one of the highest numbers they have seen since they began. It’s perhaps because of the large number of vested dogs – and the successes of the vests – that more and more handlers are aware and want to see their buddy protected. As well as providing vests to canine officers in police departments across the United States, the fund is truly international, having already vested dogs in Canada, the U.K. and Sweden, plus dogs in service with the U.S. Army in Afghanistan.

“We have had three dogs that we know of this year where the vest had saved them in fights,” Leah told us. “Our Sweden canine, Demon was stabbed in his vest multiple times by a knife and once in the tail. The vest completely saved him obviously, but his tail had to be removed from the wound. In Alaska a canine was in an apprehension where the suspect had a sword and hit the vest saving the dog. And recently this month in Ohio, police canine Rye was apprehending a bad guy in a basement. He was wearing his vest. He was stabbed by a knife in the arm and above the eye needing surgery. He is ok and recovering. The vest didn’t get stabbed, but if that turned out to be the case and the guy got him in the stomach or chest, he would have been ok. That’s all we want to see. The little bit of added protection for situations like these. Each year we hear from handlers that their canines were in apprehensions and it gave those handlers a bit of comfort knowing they had those vests to protect their best friends.”

	<p>Another amazing thing the fund does is if they hear that a canine is involved in a takedown where they are injured, survived, and were not wearing a vest they reach out to those handlers and send them a vest immediately so once they are back on the street after recovery they have the protection they need. Police canine Ranger in Sacramento is an example of that. “Ranger was stabbed so badly he bled out an enormous amount and shouldn’t be here to this day,” Leah explains. “However this tough dude is back on the streets and lives to work! The handler often reaches out to me just to thank us over and over that Ranger will be ok if that ever happens again. The entire Sacramento team was vested after Ranger because we don’t ever want to see that happen to any of their dogs.”</p> <p>There really is no better partnership than human and dog. They catch criminals, rescue us, detect explosives, drugs, diseases and more. And as Brady, Leah and their team and countless others have shown, we can give back too. On National Dog Day, we can help to honor these brave heroes by donating to one of the charities mentioned here or by taking some food to a local dog shelter, maybe you’ll even end up with a new best friend.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/25 Salaries: Pierce County for 2021</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/databases/article252005743.html">https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/databases/article252005743.html</a>
GIST	<p>This database shows base salary and total compensation for Pierce County government employees for 2021. Data was provided by the county, responding to a public records request from The News Tribune.</p> <p>SEARCH TIPS: Search by name, department or title. Sort by clicking on header row.</p>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	<i>Click on source link for interactive search</i>

HEADLINE	<b>08/25 Replace benefits before breaching dams</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattlepi.com/news/article/Report-Benefits-of-dams-must-be-replaced-before-17398578.php">https://www.seattlepi.com/news/article/Report-Benefits-of-dams-must-be-replaced-before-17398578.php</a>
GIST	<p>SPOKANE, Wash. (AP) — The benefits provided by four giant hydroelectric dams on the Snake River must be replaced before the dams can be breached to save endangered salmon runs, according to a final report issued Thursday by Washington Gov. Jay Inslee and Washington U.S. Sen. Patty Murray.</p> <p>That is especially true regarding the reliable and carbon-free electricity the dams generate, the report concluded.</p> <p>If the four Snake River dams were ultimately removed, it would be largest such project in U.S. history. In 2012 the Elwha Dam on Washington state’s Olympic Peninsula was removed to restore habitat. At the time, the National Park Service said the elimination of the Elwha Dam was the largest such project in U.S. history.</p> <p>Congress will ultimately decide if the federally-owned dams will be removed, and would have to appropriate money for the work.</p> <p>The issue is not a matter of electricity versus salmon, Thursday's report said.</p> <p>“We believe that is an oversimplified binary choice, and it is one that we do not accept or see as inevitable,” Inslee and Murray wrote.</p> <p>But, “the science is clear that – specific to the Lower Snake River – breach of the dams would provide the greatest benefit to the salmon,” the report said.</p> <p>Breaching the dams would significantly improve the ability of salmon and steelhead to swim from their inland spawning grounds to the Pacific Ocean, where they spend most of their lives, and then back to their original spawning grounds to procreate and die, the report said.</p>



Major benefits of the dams besides electricity include making the Snake River navigable up to Lewiston, Idaho, allowing barges to carry wheat and other crops to ocean ports. Eliminating the dams would require truck and rail transportation improvements to move crops, the report said. The dams also provide irrigation water for farmers and recreation opportunities for people.

A draft report released on June 9 concluded the benefits provided by the dams would cost between \$10.3 billion and \$27.2 billion to replace.

The dams have many supporters, including two GOP members of Congress representing eastern Washington state, where the dams are located. The dams are also supported by barge companies, farmers and other business interests.

Republican U.S. Reps. Dan Newhouse and Cathy McMorris Rodgers recently introduced a bill to protect the dams.

But the chairman of the Yakama Nation has said the dams must be breached.

“Our people are salmon people,” tribal council chairman Delano Saluskin said earlier this year. “When the salmon thrive, we thrive; but when they suffer, our people suffer too.”

Exploring the Columbia River Basin in 1805, Lewis and Clark wrote of waterways so full with salmon that you could all but walk across on their backs.

In the late 1800s, up to 16 million salmon and steelhead returned to the Columbia River Basin every year to spawn. Over the next century and a half, overfishing whittled that number down. By the early 1950s, just under 130,000 Chinook were returning to the Snake River.

Construction of the first dam on the lower river, Ice Harbor, began in 1955. Lower Monumental followed in 1969, Little Goose in 1970, and Lower Granite in 1975. The dams stretch from Pasco, Washington, to near Pullman, Washington, and stand between migrating salmon and 5,500 miles (8,850 kilometers) of spawning habitat in central Idaho.

The dams have fish ladders, but too many of the salmon die as they swim through the dams and across slackwater reservoirs on their migrations.

In 1991, Snake River salmon and steelhead were listed as endangered species, requiring production of a federal recovery plan. Over the next three decades, environmental organizations sued the federal government six times, arguing that the recovery plan was inadequate.

The most recent lawsuit, in 2016, resulted in a four-year study of the environmental impact of the dams. Although it found that breaching the dams would be the most effective salmon recovery action, federal agencies ultimately decided against it.

The U.S. government has spent more than \$17 billion trying to recover Snake River salmon, through improvements to fish ladders and other measures, with little to show for it. In 2017, the number of Chinook salmon returning to the Snake River dropped below 10,000.

Dam supporters blame declining salmon runs on other factors, such as changing ocean conditions.

Inslee and Murray said there are “clear areas of common agreement.”

“People of every perspective share a desire to see progress on the underlying issues and relief from the uncertainty created by litigation,” the report said.

Inslee and Murray said it is clear that, with adequate money, it is possible to replace most of the services and benefits provided by the dams and to mitigate the loss of others.

	<p>Government must move forward to provide replacements for the benefits of the dams “so that breaching of the Lower Snake River Dams is a pathway that can be credibly considered by policymakers in the future,” the report said.</p> <p>Going forward, Inslee and Murray committed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>—Substantially expand salmon habitat and passage throughout the Columbia River Basin and the Puget Sound.</li> <li>—Improve the siting process necessary to build the clean energy resources needed.</li> <li>—Leverage the investments made in the Biden administration's Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act to support energy replacement, infrastructure enhancement, and salmon recovery and habitat restoration.</li> </ul>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/25 WA follows Calif: ban new gas cars by 2035</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/transportation/wa-will-ban-new-gas-powered-cars-by-2035-following-cas-lead/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/transportation/wa-will-ban-new-gas-powered-cars-by-2035-following-cas-lead/</a>
GIST	<p>Gov. Jay Inslee said Wednesday that Washington would follow California’s lead and ban the sale of new gas-powered vehicles by 2035.</p> <p>The specific regulations for Washington will be sharpened in the coming weeks and months and the public will have the opportunity to weigh in. But the move toward zero-emission vehicles represents a significant and aggressive step toward cutting greenhouse gases in the state — a step that one Washington Republican criticized as overly proscriptive.</p> <p>“This is a critical milestone in our climate fight,” Inslee said in a tweet.</p> <p>Washington lawmakers already set a goal of <a href="#">phasing out sales of new internal combustion-powered cars by 2030</a> during the 2022 legislative session. But that was a goal, with no sticks attached.</p> <p>By contrast, California’s standards represent a total ban on nonelectric vehicles. In 2020, Washington lawmakers passed <a href="#">Senate Bill 5811</a>, the Motor Vehicles Emissions Law, directing the state Department of Ecology to adopt California’s emissions standards as they’re rolled out, which cleared the path for Inslee’s Wednesday commitment. The rule applies to passenger cars, light-duty trucks, and medium-duty passenger vehicles, such as SUVs and vans. Washington has already committed to a 35% reduction of vehicle emissions by 2026 and 68% by 2030.</p> <p>The California Air Resources Board voted Thursday to approve the 100% reduction, setting into motion Washington’s shift toward zero-emission vehicles.</p> <p>If an automaker decides not to comply, “They’re not going to do business in Washington anymore,” said Matthew Metz, founder and co-executive director of Coltura, a nonprofit that advocates for cleaner transportation infrastructure. “So this is a pretty heavy stick.”</p> <p>Gas-powered cars will not be banned outright in Washington; sales of used vehicles with internal combustion engines will continue.</p> <p>Emission standards are generally regulated at the federal level. But California was granted its first waiver in the late 1960s to set its own standards, a response to poor air quality. Other states subsequently got the green light to opt into California’s standards over the federal government’s and more than a dozen have done so.</p>

California's waiver has been a political football: former President Donald Trump halted it during his presidency and President Joe Biden reinstated it under his. Attorneys general from 17 Republican-led states have sued to revoke the waiver.

But car manufacturers, loath to pivot back and forth with each new president, have increasingly made their own commitments to phasing out the internal combustion engine. General Motors also set a 2035 deadline for ceasing production of gas-powered cars. Ford says it will invest \$50 billion in electric vehicles by 2026.

Anna Lising, senior climate adviser to Inslee, said Washington still intends to meet its 2030 goal.

"We think of the California regulation as the floor and we've set a new ceiling of trying to get that done by 2030," she said Thursday.

Getting to that point will take significant effort, in both the private and public sectors. Electric vehicles are in huge demand and supply still trails. The cars that are available tend to be expensive. Meanwhile, the availability and speed of charging stations is still a point of stress — often referred to as "range anxiety."

"It'll be a really major step forward and we're going to have to really start to hustle," said Metz. Metz pushed the state to adopt its 2030 goal, but acknowledged that the task ahead is significant. "There's a lot of work to be done to get ready."

Some of that work has begun. A state council, set up by Inslee to plan for the future of electric vehicles in the state, held its first meeting in July, where members discussed building a network of fast-charging stations on the state's highways, said Lising. The effort will be aided by \$71 million from the federal government.

The state Legislature did not pass a \$7,500 rebate for new electric cars sought by Inslee, but it did budget \$69 million to set up "community charging" stations for people who don't live in a single-family home.

Lising said she expects the new regulations, which could affect a third of Americans depending on which states decide to adopt California's rules, will incentivize manufacturers to bring more and cheaper electric vehicles online.

Rep. Andy Barkis, R-Olympia, ranking member of the Washington House Transportation Committee, said he felt the push to ban internal combustion engines would hurt both manufacturers and consumers.

"I believe the market is best to continue to determine how we transition," he said. "It may seem like a long way out, but as we all know that's a blip in the grand scheme of things."

Last month, close to 20% of new vehicle registrations in Washington were either electric or hybrid; 8% were full electric, double the number in July 2020, according to data from the Department of Licensing. In total, there are 104,000 electric vehicles — either fully battery electric or a plug-in hybrid electric — registered in the state, about 2.5 times the total from two years ago. There are around 4.7 million passenger class vehicles in the whole state, according to DOL.

California's standards do not affect all vehicles; truck-makers have an additional 10 years to phase out the internal combustion engine.

Transportation-related emissions account for more than 40% of Washington's greenhouse gas emissions. Metz estimates 25% of all emissions come from personal vehicles, of the type these new regulations affect. If all of those went electric, that would represent a 3 billion-gallon-a-year reduction in oil use in the state.

Metz said he was confident the state would get there.

	<p>“Bill Gates has said people overestimate what they can do in a year and underestimate what can be done in 10 years,” he said. “It is ambitious, but you know, we can do a lot over a longer period of time.”</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/25 Monkeypox outbreak spreads in WA</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/health/monkeypox-infecting-some-women-and-children-in-wa-as-outbreak-spreads/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/health/monkeypox-infecting-some-women-and-children-in-wa-as-outbreak-spreads/</a>
GIST	<p>A King County infant has become infected with the monkeypox virus as the outbreak grows in Washington, prompting public health leaders to again remind medical providers of possible symptoms and call attention to the seriousness of the disease.</p> <p>While the threat of infection to the general public remains low, the pediatric case serves as the latest reminder that while the current outbreak has spread primarily among men who have sex with men, anyone can become sick, state Secretary of Health Dr. Umair A. Shah said Thursday morning.</p> <p>This week, Public Health – Seattle &amp; King County said three of the county’s monkeypox patients identify as cisgender women, including one who might have been exposed through sex. A 17-year-old also tested positive for monkeypox earlier this month, according to the state Department of Health.</p> <p>“This continues to be an outbreak we’re monitoring very closely,” Shah said. “We must continue to remember this is a contact-based virus. It is not limited to any community and while it is disproportionately affecting the LGBTQ+ community, anyone anywhere can be at risk.”</p> <p>The King County infant is currently hospitalized, though they are stable and receiving treatment, according to King County’s public health department. The child was likely exposed to monkeypox through an infected family member and not through school, child care or another public setting, the department said.</p> <p>Public health officials declined to share further information about the pediatric case for privacy reasons. Shah also instructed all Washingtonians to be aware of any new rashes on their skin and that if one pops up they’re not sure about, to keep it covered, get it checked by a medical provider and avoid direct skin contact or sharing items with others.</p> <p>As of Thursday, the state has confirmed 392 monkeypox cases, including 318 in King County. No one has died from the virus in Washington, though several have been hospitalized for treatment.</p> <p>While vaccines remain in short supply locally and nationwide, a number of counties have been hosting vaccine clinics for residents most at risk.</p> <p>King County is hosting its <a href="#">second monkeypox vaccine clinic</a> Saturday at Seattle Central College from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Shots will be administered on a first come, first served basis for people who have been exposed to the virus or are <a href="#">considered to be at high risk of infection</a>.</p> <p>To date, Washington has received 16,210 vials of vaccine — 100% of the state’s current allocation, Shah said. While the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has recently authorized states to stretch the two-dose vaccines with a method that can get them up to five doses per vial, providers have noted they’re receiving closer to three or four doses per vial, Shah said.</p> <p>Early DOH estimates show about 77,000 people statewide are at the highest risk of contracting monkeypox, agency spokesperson Nikki Ostergaard said earlier this month. The number came from the state’s sexually transmitted infection surveillance, case management and other data systems, she said.</p> <p>U.S. Sen. Patty Murray this week <a href="#">renewed her call</a> to the federal government to “do more to address existing, unacceptable shortages in vaccine supply, institute comprehensive distribution and</p>

communication strategies, and develop long-term procurement plans,” she wrote in a [letter](#) to the Department of Health and Human Services, shared by The Washington Post.

“I know we’re all used to being in a pandemic. We’re used to COVID,” Dr. Scott Lindquist, state epidemiologist for communicable diseases, said Thursday. “But this outbreak of monkeypox in the midst of COVID is a large outbreak by itself — 392 people with a new disease is very disturbing. This is a maturing outbreak.”

He urged medical providers to be more open-minded about what might have caused new rashes they see and test patients for monkeypox. Unlike at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, monkeypox tests are in large supply.

Health leaders are working closely with the state’s LGBTQ Commission to reach out to LGBTQ+ communities, answer questions, share resources and quash misinformation and stigmatization, said Manny Santiago, the commission’s executive director.

“Viruses do not have a predetermined plan to impact one community over another,” Santiago said. “Both behaviors and the social contexts in which communicable diseases spread have much to do with the impact it is going to have on different communities.”

More information about monkeypox is available at the [state Department of Health website](#) and the [Public Health – Seattle & King County website](#). Anyone who thinks they might have been exposed or infected can also call the [state’s new monkeypox hotline](#), 833-829-4357, if they have questions about risk factors, vaccines, testing or treatment.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/25 Illegal eco-blocks removed for bike lanes</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/homeless/illegal-concrete-blocks-removed-bike-lanes-to-be-built-in-delridge/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/homeless/illegal-concrete-blocks-removed-bike-lanes-to-be-built-in-delridge/</a>
GIST	<p>The Seattle Department of Transportation will build protected bike lanes on a street in the Delridge neighborhood that was recently obstructed by illegal concrete blocks that were used to deter people living in RVs from parking.</p> <p>The blocks were initially placed along Southwest Andover Street in mid-June after the city of Seattle removed a long-standing RV encampment. Nucor Steel, the business neighboring the blocks, took responsibility for the blocks and removed them after the transportation department issued a warning on June 23, according to the agency.</p> <p>Across Seattle, concrete blocks, sometimes referred to “ecology” or “eco” blocks, have been <a href="#">placed anonymously and illegally</a> in public parking spaces. Often residents and business owners place them in an attempt to keep RVs in which people live from parking there.</p> <p>While the Seattle Department of Transportation has issued warnings to businesses the department suspects are responsible for placing the blocks, the agency has not fined anyone and hundreds of blocks remain across the city, according to <a href="#">a report in The Seattle Times</a>.</p> <p>The department of transportation added new pavement to Southwest Andover Street between 26th and 28th Avenue Southwest last week and intends to install a protected bike lane this fall, spokesperson Mariam Ali said.</p> <p>Crews will also make drainage and landscaping improvements, she said.</p> <p>In this case, the idea for a bike lane on the site of the former RV encampment “resonated” with the people the agency spoke with, Ali said.</p>

	<p>The bike lanes will run on both sides of Southwest Andover Street and down 28th Avenue Northwest to Southwest Yancy Street. The city is also considering an uphill protected bike lane on Southwest Yancy Street, she said.</p> <p>Until the project is completed this fall, public parking may not be available during construction hours on weekdays and temporary no-parking signs may be placed in advance, the department said <a href="#">in a news release</a>.</p> <p>The design, which is estimated to cost \$25,000, is funded by the Levy to Move Seattle, she said.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/25 Deal reached on 2 leaking nuke waste tanks</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/deal-reached-to-address-2-leaking-nuke-waste-tanks/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/deal-reached-to-address-2-leaking-nuke-waste-tanks/</a>
GIST	<p>SPOKANE, Wash. (AP) — A deal to address two nuclear waste storage tanks that are leaking radioactive materials into the soil in Washington state was reached Thursday between the state and the U.S. Department of Energy.</p> <p>The waste is left over from the production of plutonium for nuclear weapons on the Hanford Nuclear Reservation near Richland, Washington.</p> <p>From World War II through the Cold War, Hanford produced more than 70 tons of plutonium, including for the atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki, Japan, at the end of World War II. When plutonium production ceased in 1989, the site’s mission shifted to cleaning up the chemical and radioactive waste left behind, including 56 million gallons of waste stored in 177 giant underground tanks.</p> <p>The Department of Energy announced in April 2021 that Tank B-109 was leaking waste into the surrounding soil. Tank T-111 was discovered to be leaking in 2013.</p> <p>“It’s been a priority for the state of Washington to address leaking tanks in a way that protects nearby communities and the Columbia River,” said Ecology Department Director Laura Watson. “We know that ongoing vigilance and commitment will be needed to fully address these risks.”</p> <p>But state Rep. Gerry Pollet, D-Seattle, a long-time Hanford critic, noted the deal could allow the tanks to leak for years.</p> <p>“Letting a high-level nuclear waste tank continue to leak for years or decades is a dereliction of our state’s duty to protect our Columbia River, protect our groundwater, to enforce our most fundamental hazardous waste laws and adds to the history of violating Treaty rights at Hanford,” said Pollet, director of watchdog group Heart of America Northwest.</p> <p>The Department of Energy manages the nation’s largest collection of radioactive waste, located on the 580-square mile (1,502 square kilometer) Hanford site, which is about 200 miles (322 kilometers) southeast of Seattle.</p> <p>Under the agreement, the Energy Department will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>—Cover the T and B tank farms with surface barriers to prevent rain or snowmelt from seeping into the tanks, and to slow the migration of leaked waste toward the groundwater.</li> <li>—Develop a response plan for future leaks from older single-walled tanks, some of which date to World War II.</li> <li>—Evaluate the viability of installing a ventilation system to evaporate liquid waste in Tank B-109.</li> </ul>

	<p>Tank B-109 holds about 123,000 gallons of waste (465,605 liters), with about 13,000 gallons (49,210 liters) of residual liquid form. T-111 holds an estimated 397,000 (1,502,808 liters) gallons of waste; about 37,000 gallons (140,060 liters) is liquid waste within sludge.</p> <p>The Energy Department estimates Tank B-109 is leaking about 560 gallons (2,120 liters) of waste per year, and Tank T-111 is leaking about 300 gallons (1,135 liters) per year. The agency estimated it could take 25 or more years for waste from Tank B-109 to reach groundwater, and 70 or more years for Tank T-111 waste to reach groundwater.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/25 Ferry that crashed dock out until next year</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/transportation/wa-ferry-that-crashed-near-west-seattle-dock-out-until-next-year/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/transportation/wa-ferry-that-crashed-near-west-seattle-dock-out-until-next-year/</a>
GIST	<p>The Cathlamet ferry, which <a href="#">crashed in spectacular fashion</a> last month near the Fauntleroy dock in West Seattle, will undergo repairs in Everett through at least the end of the year, according to Washington State Ferries.</p> <p>The 1980s-era boat will go into dry dock at Everett Ship Repair, one of the few shipyards left in Washington and a relatively new contractor with WSF.</p> <p>How much the repairs will cost is still up in the air, said WSF spokesperson Ian Sterling. Early estimates pegged the work at around \$7 million, but could easily go higher.</p> <p>“I would anticipate them to go up,” said Sterling.</p> <p>Since the July 28 crash, the Cathlamet has been in Eagle Harbor on Bainbridge Island. Crews towed it off the island Wednesday midday.</p> <p>The damages to the boat’s exterior are dramatic, sustained when it veered off course near West Seattle at unusually high speeds and slammed into a bundle of pilings known as a dolphin. The collision crumpled one corner of the boat inward, collapsing the outside passenger deck known as the picklefork.</p> <p>There were no injuries. Several cars were damaged, including one that was pinned inside the car deck beneath the bent metal.</p> <p>The Coast Guard is leading the federal investigation into the crash, with the help of at least one investigator from the National Transportation Safety Board. The spokesperson for the northwest division of the Coast Guard, Petty Officer Steve Strohmaier, said they’ve completed a first round of interviews, but would not have more details on the cause of the crash for weeks or months.</p> <p>The captain of the Cathlamet, a veteran of Washington State Ferries, <a href="#">resigned in the aftermath of the crash</a>, although Sterling said that decision did not preclude mechanical failure.</p> <p>A lawyer representing the former captain declined to comment.</p> <p>The Cathlamet is one of six boats in the Washington State Ferries’ Issaquah class, which came online in the early 1980s. In its early days, it earned a reputation for crashing and being difficult to land, earning it the nickname the “Crash-lamet.”</p> <p>The ferry’s systems have been upgraded since then. In recent years, however, a quarter of all of its systems were in need of upgrading, <a href="#">according to WSF</a>. In early 2021 it was taken out of service for nine weeks for an <a href="#">overhaul of its reduction gears at Eagle Harbor</a>.</p> <p>In 2022, the ferry system <a href="#">hit a new low for delays</a>. Much of that is driven by crew shortages. The fleet is also aging and in need of upgrades. The Washington Legislature budgeted \$1.6 billion to upgrade the ferry</p>



	system in the last session, including four new hybrid-electric ferries. Ferry officials have called for \$4 billion in new spending to add 16 new boats.
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HEADLINE	<b>08/25 No classes: Kent teachers strike continues</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/education/kent-teachers-strike-on-the-first-day-of-school/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/education/kent-teachers-strike-on-the-first-day-of-school/</a>
GIST	<p>KENT — Demanding better wages and more manageable class sizes, Kent School District teachers went on strike Thursday on what would have been the first day of school in the South King County district.</p> <p>The district and Kent Education Association (KEA) had not reached a settlement by late Thursday, so there will be no school Friday.</p> <p>Outside Kent-Meridian High School Thursday, more than 50 educators waved signs reading “Fair Contract Now” as they walked near an intersection. Motorists honked their horns as they passed.</p> <p>Near the school, a district sign read: “Now hiring all positions.” Jay Thorton, drama teacher at the high school, called it the “ultimate irony” because, he said, the district isn’t willing to pay educators competitive wages.</p> <p>“It feels like a real slap in the face,” said Thorton, who said the school is bursting at the seams, enrollment-wise. According to state figures, Kent-Meridian’s enrollment <a href="#">grew by about 7%</a> between 2019-20 and 2021-22, although the district’s overall enrollment went down slightly during that period. Kent had an enrollment of about 25,000 students last year, making it one of the largest districts in the Seattle area.</p> <p>KEA members voted overwhelmingly Monday night to go on strike if union leadership couldn’t come to an agreement with the school district by Wednesday. They said the district was unwilling to bargain earlier in the spring, when the union was prepared to do so.</p> <p>In a statement released Wednesday, the district said it is “deeply committed to recruiting and retaining a high-quality workforce that serves to equip every student to be globally competitive in college, careers, and in life. We remain in negotiations with the KEA and remain committed to reaching an agreement and starting school as soon as possible.” On Thursday, the district declined to answer any further questions.</p> <p>The union is negotiating for more pay, smaller class sizes, and manageable caseloads for staff working with English learners and students in special education, as well as more mental health support for students.</p> <p>The base pay range for Kent teachers is from \$61,000 to \$117,000, according to <a href="#">union salary data</a>.</p> <p>Kent has one of the earliest school start dates in the Seattle area. It is one of the most diverse school districts in the state; according to state figures, about 70% of the enrollment is students of color, and 57% of students are low-income.</p> <p>For the upcoming school year, Betsy Scheline, a school counselor at Kent-Meridian, said she’s been assigned about 500 students. It’s difficult to have the bandwidth to give students the individual supports they need, she added. The American School Counselor Association recommends <a href="#">one counselor per every 250 students</a>.</p> <p>“It’s been really rough,” Scheline said. “A lot of kids came to high school without ever going to middle school. Our kids deserve better.”</p> <p>Educators picketing at Kent Elementary School stressed the importance of hiring more staff to support students in special education classes. Kristen Bobo works with kindergartners through high-need third graders in special education. The school has struggled to hire and keep instructional aides to support special education teachers, she said, so other teachers need to step in and help.</p>

	<p>During a fire drill, Bobo said, each of her students needs to hold a staffer's hand while exiting the building, "and there wasn't enough support to safely get my kids out."</p> <p>Other teachers need to take on the burden, but even then not all teachers are trained to handle students with specific needs. When a teacher is absent, "the class rarely gets picked up by substitutes because it's a tough position," Bobo said. "Some teachers don't know how to handle kids who hit or bite or have other behavioral issues."</p> <p>Denisha Saucedo, a sixth grade teacher at Kent Elementary, said when she's pulled in to help in special education classrooms, she often finds herself relying on the teacher for guidance. "The special education program is the most labor-intensive program that I'm not properly trained in."</p> <p>Students have suffered because of the teacher shortage and high teacher turnover, Saucedo said. She hopes the strike will result in a contract that makes education more equitable for all students.</p> <p>Larger class sizes in special education classes also means teachers need to dedicate more time to reviewing and assessing individualized education programs (IEPs), said Deanna Youngren, a special education teacher at Kent-Meridian. A teacher that has 30 to 32 students with IEPs has to meet with a family at least once a week, which can be a lengthy process with cumbersome paperwork.</p> <p>Youngren described the last school year as "really amazing and incredibly terrible at the same time." About 25% to 30% of students at Kent-Meridian are English learners and need individual supports because they're coming in with different levels of schooling, said Chris Juergens, a teacher in the dual language program. "It's important to have low student-to-teacher ratios," he said.</p> <p>Vicky Barkley, an English language learning teacher and instructional coach at Kent-Meridian, said students also need more individual attention because of the learning loss during the pandemic. "This last year, we had medium to large class sizes, and it's hard to provide individual supports needed and maintain case loads."</p> <p>At Monday's meeting, around 1,600 union members showed up, said union President Layla Jones, and about 94% voted to strike. There are between 1,700 and 1,800 KEA members, including classroom teachers, counselors, nurses, and speech and physical therapists.</p> <p>Kent educators last went on strike in 2009. The strike lasted 15 days, and to end it, the school district <a href="#">sought an injunction</a> to force teachers back to work. A King County Superior Court judge ruled the union would be fined \$1,500 a day and teachers would be fined \$200 a day if the strike continued. On Sept. 14, 2009, <a href="#">teachers voted overwhelmingly</a> to accept a tentative contract agreement, avoiding the fines.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/25 WSDOT: Tacoma I-5 construction wraps up</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/i-5-construction-project-in-tacoma-interstate-wrapping-up/281-e6741b4f-cb52-479b-8f22-8e41bddb5794">https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/i-5-construction-project-in-tacoma-interstate-wrapping-up/281-e6741b4f-cb52-479b-8f22-8e41bddb5794</a>
GIST	<p>TACOMA, Wash. — Construction along the stretch of <a href="#">I-5 near Tacoma</a> will be completed this weekend, the Washington State Department of Transportation announced. The announcement marks the end of a 22-year project to add HOV lanes between State Route 16, State Route 167 and I-5.</p> <p>"We are happy about it. It's a plus for us," said Tacoma resident Patrick Gigimu.</p> <p>The project, called The Tacoma/Pierce County HOV Program, cost 1.4 billion dollars and is made up of 14 smaller projects that first broke ground in 2001.</p> <p>"It is monumental. It's a relief. We're very excited. This is something that we have been working towards, for a very long time," said WSDOT spokesperson Cara Mitchell.</p>

	<p>The final piece of the project was rebuilding the Puyallup River Bridge to accommodate the HOV lanes.</p> <p>WSDOT said there will be overnight lane closures starting Thursday night to open the new HOV lanes. Southbound lane closure will be in place from 9 p.m. Thursday to 6 a.m. Friday.</p> <p>Friday morning, the southbound I-5 HOV lane across the new southbound I-5 Puyallup River Bridge to westbound state Route 16 will open. Saturday morning, crews will open the northbound I-5 HOV lane from eastbound state Route 16 to Port of Tacoma Road. Sunday morning, the final section of the southbound I-5 HOV lane will open from the King County line to 54th Ave in Fife.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/25 North Thurston teachers picket district</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.king5.com/article/news/education/teachers-picket-thurston-county/281-1107005c-f3ed-40d8-8adc-d953394595d4">https://www.king5.com/article/news/education/teachers-picket-thurston-county/281-1107005c-f3ed-40d8-8adc-d953394595d4</a>
GIST	<p>THURSTON COUNTY, Wash. — Members of the North Thurston Education Association marched to the North Thurston Public Schools’ offices Thursday morning to hold an informational picket.</p> <p>Association Vice President Katie Agren said the picket aims to send a message to the school district:</p> <p>“We need the district to support us in reducing our workload so we can be there for the kids,” Agren said.</p> <p>The union represents 970 educators in the school district and has been in negotiations throughout the year to come up with a new collective bargaining agreement before the current contracts end at the end of August.</p> <p>Association President Ray Nelson said that addressing the teachers’ workload is the top priority in these negotiations. But that’s not all that educators are calling for.</p> <p>“Genuine collaboration with the district so that we’re an equal partner in the running of the district,” Nelson said. “Lastly is compensation, because the cost of living has gone up and people need some relief from that.”</p> <p>Nelson also highlighted the stress that teachers face when operating in an environment meant to help cope with the aftershocks of a global pandemic.</p> <p>“The teachers in this district recognize the work is going to be hard, they know that, and for some of that, they’re willing to step up to the plate. But there comes a point, and I think we’ve been there for a little while, where the extra investment that it’s going to take is going to mean time from their personal lives,” Nelson explained. “To plan more powerful lessons, more targeted lessons to individual students and smaller groups because of the learning gap that has occurred due to the pandemic, I will do that, but I do need to be compensated for it.”</p> <p>After the picket, union members met with officials from the district to sit down at the bargaining table.</p> <p>Nelson said he’s cautiously optimistic, but it’s unfortunate that it had to get to this point.</p> <p>“I don’t want to be doing this,” Nelson said. “I’d rather be doing things that support teachers in their everyday work and getting them ready for school than this kind of thing.”</p> <p>Now, Nelson simply hopes that the district’s educators get what they need in time to be there for Thurston County’s students.</p> <p>“We really need to focus on getting kids back on track, but that means providing teachers with the resources they need to do that, not continue to pile stuff on,” he said.</p>

	<p>The North Thurston School District released a statement saying negotiations are currently underway and district officials anticipate school will start on time.</p> <p>Meanwhile, union members said they'll be meeting again on August 31, and today's negotiations will determine what their next move will be.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/25 E. coli outbreak linked to Wendy's worsens</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/Health/coli-outbreak-linked-wendys-grows-84-reported-cases/story?id=88863198">https://abcnews.go.com/Health/coli-outbreak-linked-wendys-grows-84-reported-cases/story?id=88863198</a>
GIST	<p>A <a href="#">multi-state E. coli outbreak</a> associated with romaine lettuce in sandwiches from Wendy's has grown, with dozens more infections reported in the past week, according to federal health officials.</p> <p>Since Aug. 17, when the outbreak was first publicized, 55 more illnesses in the outbreak have been reported to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention -- bringing the total number of reported infections to 84, the agency said Thursday.</p> <p>Among those, 38 people have been hospitalized, including eight people in Michigan who have a type of kidney failure called hemolytic uremic syndrome, the CDC said. No deaths have been reported so far.</p> <p>The infections have been reported to the CDC from four states: Michigan (53); Ohio (23); Indiana (six); and Pennsylvania (two).</p> <p>CDC investigators are working to confirm the source of the outbreak, though many of those who became sick reported eating at Wendy's, the CDC said.</p> <p>"A specific food has not yet been confirmed as the source of this outbreak, but many sick people reported eating sandwiches with romaine lettuce at Wendy's restaurants in Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Pennsylvania before getting sick," the CDC said in its <a href="#">notice</a>.</p> <p>Among 62 people interviewed by investigators, 52 of them (84%) reported eating at a Wendy's the week before they became sick, the CDC said. Of 17 people with detailed information about what they ate there, 15 (88%) reported eating romaine lettuce served on burgers and sandwiches.</p> <p>As a precaution, the fast food chain has removed the romaine lettuce used in sandwiches from restaurants in that region. A different type of romaine lettuce is used in salads.</p> <p>In a <a href="#">statement on its website</a> Friday, Wendy's confirmed that it was "fully cooperating with public health authorities on their ongoing investigation of the regional E. coli outbreak reported in certain midwestern states," adding that it was "taking the precaution of discarding and replacing the sandwich lettuce at some restaurants in that region."</p> <p>"The lettuce that we use in our salads is different, and is not affected by this action. As a company, we are committed to upholding our high standards of food safety and quality," the statement read.</p> <p>The CDC is not advising that people stop eating at Wendy's or to stop eating romaine lettuce in general. "At this time, there is no evidence to indicate that romaine lettuce sold in grocery stores, served in other restaurants, or in people's homes is linked to this outbreak," the CDC said.</p> <p>Most people infected with E. coli experience severe stomach cramps, vomiting and often bloody diarrhea, which typically start three to four days after ingesting the bacteria.</p> <p>The CDC is urging people to call their health care provider immediately if they have severe symptoms, such as diarrhea for more than three days, diarrhea and a fever higher than 102 degrees, vomiting to the point where you can't keep liquids down and signs of dehydration.</p>

	Most recover without treatment within a week, though some people may develop kidney failure.
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HEADLINE	<b>08/25 Polio vaccination rates vary by state</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/Health/us-states-highest-lowest-polio-vaccination-rates/story?id=88539770">https://abcnews.go.com/Health/us-states-highest-lowest-polio-vaccination-rates/story?id=88539770</a>
GIST	<p>With a single case of <a href="#">paralytic polio detected in Rockland County, New York</a>, and the virus showing up in <a href="#">wastewater samples</a> in two counties in the state, as well as New York City, health officials say polio is likely circulating undetected.</p> <p>This is a particular danger to unvaccinated communities because polio can occasionally lead to severe symptoms including meningitis, permanent paralysis and even death.</p> <p>"For every one case of paralytic polio identified, hundreds more may be undetected," New York Health Commissioner Dr. Mary Bassett said in a <a href="#">statement</a> earlier this month. "The best way to keep adults and children polio-free is through safe and effective immunization."</p> <p>The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends children receive <a href="#">four doses of the polio vaccine</a> with one dose each administered at 2 months old; 4 months old; between 6 months and 18 months old; and between ages 4 and 6.</p> <p>Currently, every state and the District of Columbia requires children enrolling in kindergarten to have received at least three doses or all four doses of the vaccine.</p> <p>Although <a href="#">CDC data</a> shows almost 94% of kindergarten-age students in the U.S. received the polio vaccine for the 2020-2021 school year, rates vary by state.</p> <p>Data shows Mississippi has the highest rate in the country with 98.9% of kindergartners vaccinated against polio.</p> <p>Rounding out the top five are Louisiana; New York, excluding New York City; Nebraska; and Rhode Island.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Washington, D.C. has the lowest rate with just 80.4% of students vaccinated ahead of the school year.</p> <p>Idaho has the second-lowest rate at 86.6% followed by Wisconsin, Hawaii and Georgia -- all with rates under 90%.</p> <p>"What you need for outbreaks to start and to persist in our population is where people are not optimally vaccinated, where there are a lot of unvaccinated people," Dr. Adam Ratner, director of pediatric infectious diseases at NYU Langone Health, told ABC News. "And that doesn't have to be at the level of a country or a state or even a county. It can be small pockets of people that can't handle an outbreak and keep it going."</p> <p>Experts told ABC News there are many factors contributing to low vaccination rates, but one of the main factors is the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>They explained that because parents weren't taking their children for routine appointments, vaccinations were missed, and because children were not physically in classrooms, enforcement of vaccinations required to attend school became lax.</p> <p>"Primary health care has been disrupted, overall," Dr. Walter Orenstein, associate director of the Emory Vaccine Center, told ABC News. "Since many children get their immunizations in primary health care, they're not making visits. If it's more telemedicine, then you lose opportunities to vaccinate."</p>

Between 1951 and 1954, an average of 16,000 paralytic polio cases and 1,800 deaths from polio were reported every year, [according to the CDC](#). In 1955, the first polio vaccine became widely available.

Cases slowly fell from fewer than 1,000 per year to fewer than 100 per year. By 1994, [polio was declared eliminated](#) in the Americas.

Experts say because the disease is so rarely seen anymore, people don't remember a time when polio ran rampant.

"Many people have never seen a case of polio because we had eliminated, until this recent introduction, polio in the United States and much of the world," Orenstein said. "And these are terrible diseases and vaccines are so good at preventing them."

Exemptions are likely another reason behind the low rates, the experts said.

All 50 states allow children to be exempted from vaccination for medical reasons, such as being allergic to a vaccine component or a weakened immune system that would make getting a vaccine harmful.

However, some states allow for non-medical exemptions including religious beliefs or philosophical and personal beliefs.

In Idaho, 8.2% of kindergartners had an exemption from one or more vaccines for the 2020-2021 school year, mostly for non-medical reasons. Similarly, 5.2% of kindergartners in Wisconsin were exempt from one or more vaccines, CDC data shows.

However, in Mississippi, exemptions for "religious, philosophical, or conscientious reasons" are not allowed under state law, according to the [Mississippi State Department of Health](#).

That means just 0.1% of Mississippi kindergartners had exemptions for one or more vaccines last school year, and solely for medical reasons, according to CDC data.

Similarly, [New York state eliminated non-medical exemptions](#) for required vaccinations in schools, including the polio vaccine.

As a result, the Empire State also had just 0.1% of kindergarten-age students in the state who were exempt for medical reasons, CDC data shows.

"The data are clear that the more rigorous school laws are in their enforcement, the higher the immunization coverage," Orenstein said.

To improve these rates, the experts said communities need to be educated on the safety and efficacy of vaccines.

"We need to find people who are trusted by the hesitant and who could be messengers to educate them about the safety and effectiveness of vaccines, the tremendous rigor with which a vaccine is produced and evaluated before it becomes licensed and available, the continuing monitoring system for safety and effectiveness," Orenstein said.

Ratner said public health departments can also have targeted outreach to communities with lower vaccination rates to combat misinformation and understand why people are hesitant about vaccination.

"The things that we vaccinate against are, without exception, dangerous diseases," he said. "They are real, dangerous diseases that are not gone. If you think about polio, where it's been out of people's minds in the U.S. for a long time, because we haven't had polio cases here for a long time and that's great. But the reason that we haven't had polio cases here is that we vaccinate our kids."



	<p>Ratner said it's frustrating to hear of polio being detected again.</p> <p>"And kids who are under-vaccinated, and there are plenty of them, are really, truly at risk of paralytic polio," he added. "And it is sad and frustrating to take care of kids who have things that we can prevent."</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>08/26 US Tennessee senator visits Taiwan</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/us-senator-visits-taiwan-amid-high-tensions-china-88847816">https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/us-senator-visits-taiwan-amid-high-tensions-china-88847816</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>TAIPEI, Taiwan -- U.S. Sen. Marsha Blackburn met with Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen on Friday, in the second visit by members of Congress since House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's trip earlier this month sharply raised tensions with China.</p> <p>In her remarks, Tsai pointed to the large-scale military exercises that China launched in response to Pelosi's visit, as well as Russia's invasion of Ukraine, as posing challenges to democratic governments such as the U.S. and Taiwan.</p> <p>"These developments demonstrate how authoritarian countries are disrupting and threatening the world order," she said.</p> <p>Blackburn, a Republican from Tennessee, reaffirmed shared values between the two governments and said she "looked forward to continuing to support Taiwan as they push forward as an independent nation."</p> <p>China claims self-ruled Taiwan as its own territory, to be taken by force if necessary, and sees high-level foreign visits to the island as interference in its affairs and de facto recognition of Taiwanese sovereignty. China's recent military drills were seen by some as a rehearsal of future military action against the island, which U.S. military leaders say could come within the next few years.</p> <p>In their meeting, Tsai and Blackburn also underscored the importance of economic links, especially in the semiconductor sector, where Taiwan is a world leader and the U.S. is seeking greater investment at home.</p> <p>Blackburn arrived in Taipei late Thursday after visiting Fiji, the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea as part of a U.S. push to "expand our diplomatic footprint in the area," her office said in a statement.</p> <p>"The Indo-Pacific region is the next frontier for the new axis of evil," Blackburn, a staunch supporter of former President Donald Trump, was quoted as saying. "We must stand against the Chinese Communist Party."</p> <p>China has been making inroads in the western Pacific, signing a broad security agreement with the Solomons that the U.S. and allies such as Australia see as an attempt to overthrow the traditional security order in the region.</p> <p>Pelosi was the highest-level member of the U.S. government to visit Taiwan in 25 years. China's response was to announce six zones surrounding the island for military exercises that included firing missiles over the island and sending ships across the midline of the Taiwan Strait, seen as a buffer between the two sides. Some of the missiles landed in Japan's exclusive economic zone.</p> <p>Following Pelosi's trip, a delegation of House and Senate members visited. This week, Indiana's governor made a visit focused on business and academic cooperation. U.S politicians have called their visits a show of support for the island.</p> <p>"I just landed in Taiwan to send a message to Beijing — we will not be bullied," said Blackburn in a tweet early morning Friday. "The United States remains steadfast in preserving freedom around the globe, and will not tolerate efforts to undermine our nation and our allies."</p>

	<p>Taiwan also welcomed senior Japanese lawmakers this week.</p> <p>The island's Foreign Minister, Joseph Wu, said Friday he welcomed all such visits by foreign government officials.</p> <p>“Because of the military pressure China has demonstrated against Taiwan, there are more people than ever who want to come and show their support in Taiwan,” Wu said. “You have seen quite a few already. And I can tell you there will be more.”</p> <p>During her three-day visit, Blackburn is also due to meet with the head of Taiwan's National Security Council.</p> <p>Washington has no official diplomatic ties with Taipei in deference to China, but remains the island's biggest security guarantor, with U.S. law requiring it ensure Taiwan has the means to defend itself and to regard threats to the island as matters of “grave concern.”</p> <p>Taiwan and China split in 1949 after a civil war and have no official relations but are bound by billions of dollars of trade and investment.</p> <p>China has increased its pressure on Taiwan since it elected independence-leaning Tsai as its president. When Tsai refused to endorse the concept of a single Chinese nation, China cut off contact with the Taiwanese government.</p> <p>U.S. congressional visits to the island have stepped up in frequency in the past year.</p> <p>On Thursday, the executive branch of Taiwan's government laid out plans for a 12.9% increase in the Defense Ministry's annual budget next year. The government is planning to spend an additional 47.5 billion New Taiwan dollars (\$1.6 billion), for a total of 415.1 billion NTD (\$13.8 billion) for the year.</p> <p>The Defense Ministry said the increase is due to the “Chinese Communists' continued expansion of targeted military activities in recent years, the normalization of their harassment of Taiwan's nearby waters and airspace with warships and war planes.”</p> <p>Also Thursday, the Defense Ministry said it tracked four Chinese naval ships and 15 warplanes in the region surrounding the island.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/25 US: China disinformation Uyghur genocide</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.voanews.com/a/us-china-works-to-manipulate-xinjiang-discourse/6715883.html">https://www.voanews.com/a/us-china-works-to-manipulate-xinjiang-discourse/6715883.html</a>
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON — Members of the Uyghur diaspora are welcoming a U.S. State Department report on China’s efforts to manipulate global opinion regarding its western Xinjiang region but say Beijing’s approach is not new.</p> <p>“We have been highlighting China’s disinformation campaign on the Uyghur genocide for many years,” Rushan Abbas, executive director of the Washington-based Campaign for Uyghurs, told VOA.</p> <p>“It’s great to see the State Department finally recognizing the extent and depth to which this is happening and confirming with this timely report,” she added.</p> <p>The <a href="#">report</a>, released Wednesday, accuses China of seeking to “drown out,” marginalize and harass those who are critical of Beijing’s treatment of Uyghurs.</p> <p>Titled <i>PRC Efforts to Manipulate Global Public Opinion on Xinjiang</i>, it says Beijing is actively attempting to dominate global discussions on Xinjiang and discredit reports from independent sources.</p>

According to the report, the tactics Beijing has used amount to “digital transnational repression.” It lists trolling and cyberbullying as methods to silence dissent. China is also accused of denying criticism from independent media sources by amplifying “positive stories ... to counter accusations of genocide and crimes against humanity.”

The State Department report also alleges that China uses “whataboutism” and false equivalencies, meaning it says other countries are just as guilty of human rights abuses to distract from criticism.

“PRC messaging tactics seek to drown out critical narratives by both flooding the international information environment to limit access to content that contradicts Beijing’s official line, and by creating an artificial appearance of support for PRC policies,” the report said. “Messengers use sophisticated A.I.-generated images to create the appearance of authenticity of fake user profiles,” the report said, referencing the use of artificial intelligence.

Many Western governments and human rights groups [accuse China](#) of genocide, forced labor and arbitrary detention of 1 million Turkic Muslims, largely Uyghurs, in reeducation camps.

### **China’s response**

China has repeatedly [denied the accusations](#) and has said the facilities are vocational education and training centers aimed at deradicalizing “trainees” and countering terrorism.

In June, a U.S. law known as the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act went into effect, aimed at scrutinizing and banning imported goods from the Xinjiang region unless there is “clear and convincing evidence” that no forced labor is involved.

Forced labor and genocide of Uyghurs in Xinjiang “are nothing but vicious lies concocted” by anti-China forces, said a Chinese Embassy spokesperson in Washington, Liu Pengyu.

“The US side keeps using Xinjiang-related issues to create rumors and make trouble,” Liu wrote in an email to VOA.

“It is the US government that has been spreading false information and lies. What China is doing is telling the world the truth about China's Xinjiang region,” he said.

### **Uyghur diaspora’s response**

Campaign for Uyghurs, through its advocacy work in educating the public about China’s repression of Uyghurs, has been fighting Beijing’s disinformation campaign daily, said Abbas.

“I hope this report wakes the public up and makes them think twice before they read anything coming out of China regarding the camps and [the] Uyghur situation,” Abbas said. “I urge everyone to independently read and research about the largest internment of a people since the Holocaust.”

Abbas said her sister was arbitrarily detained by the Chinese government in Urumqi, the capital of Xinjiang. Abbas has lost all contact with her sister since her detention.

“I am living through this every day. My own sister has been suffering in these camps with no end in sight for the last four years,” Abbas said. “I am just one of the victims out of the millions of Uyghurs around the world trying to seek freedom for our loved ones.”

According to Salih Hudayar, founder of the Washington-based East Turkistan National Awakening Movement and prime minister of the East Turkistan Government in Exile, the Chinese disinformation campaign has targeted not only Xinjiang but also other regions in China.

“China has actively been manipulating global public opinion on the facts about East Turkistan, Tibet and other countries occupied by China,” Hudayar said. “In light of this report, we hope the U.S. government takes concrete measures to push back against China's efforts to manipulate facts regarding East Turkistan.”

Most Uyghurs in exile prefer to use the name East Turkistan instead of Xinjiang, which is a name given to the region by China's government in the 1800s.

In recent years, some U.S. social media companies such as YouTube and Twitter have begun labeling state-controlled media accounts and have announced the removal of fake accounts suspected of being related to the Chinese government.

Hudayar said more needs to be done and is asking the U.S. government to pressure social media platforms to prevent Beijing from using these digital outlets to engage in disinformation campaigns and cyberbullying of China critics.

"We also urge the U.S. government to counter China's false narratives by supporting East Turkistani entities, including the East Turkistan Government in Exile and the East Turkistan National Awakening Movement, and their efforts to promote the truth about East Turkistan and China's ongoing genocide of Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples," Hudayar said.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/25 China influence in Eastern Europe peaked?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.rferl.org/a/china-russia-eastern-europe-influence-waning-analysis/32003696.html">https://www.rferl.org/a/china-russia-eastern-europe-influence-waning-analysis/32003696.html</a>
GIST	<p>In the early days after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, some officials and analysts raised the possibility of China playing a mediating role or even pushing Moscow to the <a href="#">negotiating table</a> to help end the conflict.</p> <p>But after six months of war, few still hold that hope.</p> <p>While Beijing has avoided providing weapons and overt economic assistance to Russia and claims it is neutral in the war, the Chinese media have also <a href="#">parroted Kremlin propaganda, boosted its economy</a> through Russian energy purchases, conducted military exercises with Russia, and provided diplomatic cover to Moscow at international bodies like the United Nations.</p> <p>This hasn't gone unnoticed in Central and Eastern Europe, where China's moves throughout the war and the "no limits" partnership it declared with Russia in February have tarnished Beijing's reputation and seen its <a href="#">favorable ratings fall</a>.</p> <p>In a sign of China's diminished standing, Estonia and Latvia on August 11 left the so-called 16+1 format -- a Beijing-led group meant to hold regular negotiations with Central and Eastern European countries and expand Chinese influence across the region.</p> <p>The following week, a group of Ukrainian lawmakers called for a review of Kyiv's ties with Beijing and announced the formation of a parliamentary caucus meant to promote closer ties with Taiwan and potentially open a representative office for Ukraine in Taipei.</p> <p>"The reaction of the Taiwanese people and government to [Russia's] full-scale invasion was very important to our country," Inna Sovsun, the deputy head of Ukraine's opposition Voice party who joined the pro-Taiwan parliamentary group, told RFE/RL. "As security issues have become very challenging for both Ukraine and Taiwan over the last months, [it's] a good time to [take] the first steps in Ukraine-Taiwan friendship."</p> <p>From Kyiv to Bucharest to Tallinn, countries in the region -- many of whom have their own histories with Russian occupation and aggression -- are now echoing that sentiment and looking to distance themselves from Beijing due to its stance over Moscow's invasion.</p> <p>After China's ambassador in Moscow reiterated Beijing's view that the United States is the main culprit for the war, Oleksandr Merezhko, the head of the Ukrainian parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee, called for a review of Kyiv's relations with China.</p>

In Estonia, Foreign Minister Urmas Reinsalu said China's refusal to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine "was definitely a factor" in Estonia's decision to [pull out](#) of the 16+1 group.

"It's clear that [Russian President Vladimir] Putin tries to create alliances with authoritarian and totalitarian regimes all over the world," Sovsun said. "The path of Ukraine is to develop together with democratic countries that respect international law and are ready to oppose the aggression of hostile countries."

### **'Long In The Making'**

Before Moscow's invasion, Ukraine [sought to build](#) strong economic ties with Beijing as it reoriented its economy away from Russia and sought to limit its dependence on the West, even signing a strategic partnership with China in 2013.

Throughout the war, Ukrainian officials have largely been muted about China's close ties with Russia but occasionally expressed the hope that Beijing could use its influence over Moscow to help end the war, a position most recently expressed in early August by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy during an interview with the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post. Zelenskiy, however, [has been unable](#) to get a phone call with Chinese President Xi Jinping since Russia invaded Ukraine in February.

Governments across Central and Eastern Europe have also shifted away from formerly China-friendly positions, although many began to change course prior to Russia's invasion.

"[This] was long in the making," a Baltic official who requested anonymity in order to speak openly, told RFE/RL. "For the Baltic states, it didn't make sense to be [in the 16+1] anymore. [There] were no investments coming in and the reputational damage for dividing the European Union is bigger now."

Originally launched in 2012 and received with enthusiasm across the region, the 16+1 was seen as a chance for local governments to attract Chinese investment and benefit from China's rising global position. The group [expanded](#) to include Greece in 2019 and was renamed the 17+1, but that proved to be the high-water mark for the diplomatic format, which included 12 EU countries.

Relations between Brussels and Beijing have [frayed](#) in recent years over human rights issues involving abuses in Hong Kong and Chinese internment camps against Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities in its Xinjiang Province. Similarly, many Central and Eastern European governments were frustrated by the lack of Chinese investment in their countries and the growing view in Washington and Brussels that the format was designed by China to create political divisions within the EU.

Lithuania was the [first to leave](#) the framework in 2021 and later found itself embroiled in a high-level diplomatic spat with Beijing over Taiwan that same year. Slovakia and the Czech Republic are still in the grouping, but they have also distanced themselves from China and built up relations with Taiwan.

In April, Beijing looked to repair some of the damage done to its reputation in recent years by dispatching Huo Yuzhen, the Foreign Ministry's special representative for China and Central and Eastern European cooperation. Huo traveled to eight countries during his tour in hopes of reviving the 16+1 but received a lukewarm reception and was even refused a meeting with Polish officials.

"With China exercising similar imperialist military tactics against Taiwan [as Moscow has toward Ukraine] and joining [military] drills with Russia, it's also very easy now to argue to society and those businesses who were still hoping for economic gain [from China]," said the Baltic official.

While China's partnership with Russia and policies throughout the war may be the breaking point for some officials in Ukraine, Ukrainian lawmaker Sovsun said she was advocating for a review of Kyiv's partnership with China since before the war began and that "attempts [by Kyiv] to cooperate more with China in the last few years sent very confusing signals to our partners."

She adds that the Taiwan caucus in parliament has taken some inspiration from Lithuania, with the Baltic country opening a representative office in Taiwan and deepening economic cooperation, especially on vital technologies such as 5G networks, semiconductors, and artificial intelligence -- a path that Ukraine could follow.

"I think the caucus may become a bridge that will allow cooperation to start between Ukrainian and Taiwanese [lawmakers] at the official level," Sovsun said.

### **The New Europe And China**

While China's political influence may have reached its zenith across much of Central and Eastern Europe, not all governments will necessarily be looking to follow the course of the Baltic states.

In Romania, a slew of investment deals and projects were signed with China between 2012 and 2015, but they have since been suspended or abandoned. The decision by Bucharest to drop projects such as a power-plant deal or to block Chinese participation in its 5G infrastructure came amid a [U.S.-led campaign](#) to limit its rollout across Europe.

Andrei Tiut, the program director at Global Focus Center, a Bucharest-based think tank, told RFE/RL that Chinese influence in the country has largely stalled due to "a combination of American pressure and perhaps insufficient or unclear benefits for Romania." He adds that the war in Ukraine only "strengthened this perspective" by reminding politicians that Romania's security is linked to being part of the West and a NATO member.

Unlike the Baltics, Romania has not left China's regional format, but Tiut says there remains room for nuance for how Bucharest and other countries in the region will navigate their ties with China in the future.

"I don't think that putting further distance between China is in any way a priority in Romania given the Ukraine war and some political disagreements within the [ruling government] coalition," he said. "However, once the war is over and economic hardships remain, China may be able to present itself convincingly as a help in Romania's development."

A lot may hinge on global economic conditions over the coming years, particularly in the EU. While many governments are looking to limit their ties to China, others are deepening their links. According to a [recent study](#) by the German Economic Institute, the German economy has become more dependent on China in the first half of 2022, despite growing pressure for it to pivot away.

Meanwhile, in Hungary, Prime Minister Viktor Orban's government continues to deepen its ties with China and [signed the largest investment](#) in Hungarian history on August 12 with the Chinese Contemporary Amperex Technology Co. Limited (CATL), the world's largest battery manufacturer. The \$7.6 billion investment will set up CATL's second plant in Europe, and the Hungarian government has classified the factory as a priority project that will create 9,000 jobs.

For countries like Romania, it will be watching closely what other governments in the region and beyond decide for how to chart their China ties.

"Should more countries start to consider shifting their positions [on] China, Romania may decide to be among those who choose to follow the example of the Baltics," said Tiut.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/25 Huawei sparks alarm: 'painful' next decade</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2022/aug/25/huawei-founder-sparks-alarm-warning-painful-next-decade-ren-zhengfei-china">https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2022/aug/25/huawei-founder-sparks-alarm-warning-painful-next-decade-ren-zhengfei-china</a>



The founder of [Huawei](#) has delivered a stark warning for the tech company's future, sparking alarm with the frankness of his assessment and what it signals for smaller businesses amid China's economic troubles and a global downturn.

In a leaked internal memo, Ren Zhengfei told Huawei staff "the chill will be felt by everyone" and the company must focus on profit over cashflow and expansion if it is to survive the next three years, indicating further job cuts and divestments.

"The next decade will be a very painful historical period, as the global economy continues to decline," Ren said, pointing to the pandemic as well as the impact of the Ukraine war and a "continued blockade" by the US on some Chinese business.

"Huawei must reduce any overly optimistic expectations for the future and until 2023 or even 2025, we must make survival the most important guideline, and not only survive but survive with quality."

[China's economy is under pressure](#) from factors including pandemic restrictions, a property industry crisis and plummeting international relations. The country is not expected to reach its economic growth target of 5.5% this year.

Huawei, routinely listed as China's largest firm, is working to manage big falls in revenue and profit. [Revenue declined 14%](#) in the first three months of 2022 and its net profit margin narrowed to 4.3%, from 11.1% a year earlier, in the three months through March.

It has been a flashpoint of US-China tensions, with Washington and other western counterparts [restricting Huawei from their markets](#) over national security concerns. The company has also been barred from buying some foreign technology.

"In the past, we embraced the ideal of globalisation and aspired to serve all mankind, so what is our ideal now?" wrote Ren.

"Survive and earn a little money where we can. From this point of view, we need to adjust the market structure and study what can be done and what should be abandoned."

Ren's memo went viral on Chinese social media, shared and discussed by more than 100 million users, with some expressing fear of what it meant for regular people and small businesses if a company the size of Huawei was sending such warnings.

"The last person who said such things was Vanke's Wang Shi and then real estate was in danger," said one commenter, referring to the chief executive of a state-run property development company.

Several blamed the US, with one commenter saying Huawei's expansion "came to an abrupt end under the frenzied suppression of the United States".

Linghao Bao, an analyst at Trivium [China](#), said the global economy was in bad shape and it was not unusual to be cutting costs in a recession. "The reason why Ren Zhengfei's words stood out is the way he said it. He sounded like he was in panic mode," he said.

"In addition, it's a politically sensitive time right now. We're just a couple of months away from the 20th party congress. As you know, economic performance is tied up with the party's legitimacy."

Professor Steve Tsang, director of the SOAS China Institute, said Ren enjoyed a status that might allow him to speak more freely than others, and should be taken seriously.

"When someone like Ren admits how much trouble a national champion like Huawei can be facing as a result of US sanctions, it does indicate the wider Chinese economy is also vulnerable," said Tsang. "But that is, as the saying goes, above his pay grade and is a matter for Xi Jinping to decide on how to tackle."

	<p>The questions are whether Xi will have the pragmatism and vision of Ren to come up with something that may be as effective as what Ren is putting forth for Huawei.”</p> <p>China’s government this week announced a further \$146bn (£123bn) in stimulus funding and 19 new measures to address the economic damage wrought by the pandemic and the country’s hardline responses, as well as a crisis in the property development industry.</p> <p>Extensive and unpredictable lockdowns have disrupted factory production, supply chains and general economic activity, particularly among small businesses. The private sector provides a third of all jobs in China and creates 90% of new urban jobs, according to state media.</p> <p>Youth unemployment reached an all-time high of 19.9% in July and the general urban jobless rate remained at a relatively high rate of 5.4%. Unemployment insurance payouts also hit a record high in June.</p> <p>“Amid sporadic Covid-19 outbreaks in some regions since the beginning of this year, job demand in the market has reduced and some recruitment campaigns have been cancelled or delayed,” Zhang Ying, the director of employment promotion at the ministry of human resources and social security, said at a news conference on Thursday.</p> <p>“Some young job hunters have encountered new difficulties.”</p>
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## Cyber, Tech Awareness

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HEADLINE	08/26 Taliban ban crypto in Afghanistan
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-08-26/taliban-ban-crypto-in-afghanistan-arrest-digital-coin-dealers?srnd=premium">https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-08-26/taliban-ban-crypto-in-afghanistan-arrest-digital-coin-dealers?srnd=premium</a>
GIST	<p>Afghanistan’s central bank imposed a nationwide ban on cryptocurrencies this month and the Taliban regime has arrested several dealers who defied orders to stop trading digital tokens, according to a senior police official.</p> <p>The crackdown comes after some Afghans turned to cryptocurrencies to <a href="#">preserve</a> their wealth and keep it out of the Taliban’s reach. Crypto has become a popular way of moving money in and out of the country, which is shut off from the global banking system due to sanctions leveled on the militant group.</p> <p>While countries from Singapore to the US are tightening crypto regulations in the wake of a market crash that wiped out some \$2 trillion of wealth and drove several high-profile firms into <a href="#">bankruptcy</a>, outright bans are much rarer. Afghanistan now joins China, which declared all crypto transactions illegal in September 2021.</p> <p>“The central bank gave us an order to stop all money changers, individuals, and businesspeople from trading fraudulent digital currencies like what is commonly referred to as Bitcoin,” Sayed Shah Saadaat, head of criminal investigations at the police headquarters in Herat, said by phone.</p> <p>Saadaat said 13 people were arrested, most of whom were released on bail, while more than 20 crypto-related businesses have been shut down in Herat, Afghanistan’s third-largest city and a hub for trading in digital tokens. Four of the six crypto brokerages in Afghanistan are located in the city, some 75 miles (121 kilometers) away from the Iranian border.</p> <p>A report last year by blockchain research firm Chainalysis ranked Afghanistan as one of the top 20 countries in the world in terms of crypto adoption. The results were weighted by purchasing power parity per capita, which favors poorer nations.</p>

	<p>The Taliban in <a href="#">February</a> said they'd study whether digital tokens can be allowed under Islamic financial practices, as they were looking at all options to revive the economy, which collapsed after last year's messy withdrawal of US forces paved the way for the Taliban to seize control.</p> <p>Some religious scholars had long predicted that the Taliban would end up banning crypto because it's considered "haram," or forbidden to Muslims as it has elements of wagering and uncertainty. However, other Muslim-majority countries have taken a more lenient approach. The United Arab Emirates allow crypto trading in Dubai's free zone, while Bahrain have backed digital assets since 2019.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/25 Iran hacking group exploits Log4j flaw</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.scmagazine.com/analysis/threat-intelligence/microsoft-iranian-cyberespionage-group-likely-exploiting-log4j-vulnerability">https://www.scmagazine.com/analysis/threat-intelligence/microsoft-iranian-cyberespionage-group-likely-exploiting-log4j-vulnerability</a>
GIST	<p>A hacking group linked to the Iranian government has been exploiting Log4j 2 vulnerabilities in SysAid, a set of popular IT support and management software applications, according to Microsoft.</p> <p>The company's threat intelligence center and other components <a href="#">asserted</a> with "moderate confidence" this week that the group, which they call MERCURY (also known as MuddyWater), has been exploiting Log4j vulnerabilities in SysAid servers that are running the vulnerable code. Both Microsoft and the U.S. government have identified the group as affiliated with the Iranian Ministry of Intelligence, and the organizations targeted were all located in Israel, a top geopolitical foe of the Islamic Republic.</p> <p>Microsoft, which receives telemetry from billions of endpoints and other assets across its vast customer base, observed the group breaking into SysAid applications on July 23 and 25 of this year. They believe the compromises were used to gain initial access to victim environments, but the company appears to be inferring from that data that the Apache vulnerabilities, which allows for remote code execution, were being leveraged.</p> <p>"Based on observations from past campaigns and vulnerabilities found in target environments, Microsoft assess that the exploits used were most likely related to Log4j 2," Microsoft wrote. "The threat actor leveraged Log4j 2 exploits against VMware applications earlier in 2022 and likely looked for similarly vulnerable internet-facing apps. SysAid, which provides IT management tools, might have presented as an attractive target for its presence in the targeted country."</p> <p>The actors used that access to drop webshells and conduct a number of reconnaissance based activities. In other cases, the access was used to download the group's preferred tools to conduct lateral movement or establish a persistent presence within victim networks. That includes stealing user credentials, escalating to administrator privileges and adding malware to startup folders to ensure access even if the victim reboots.</p> <p>MuddyWater is viewed by many threat intelligence organizations and U.S. government agencies <a href="#">like Cyber Command</a> as Iran's top cyberespionage group, <a href="#">with a heavy presence</a> in Middle Eastern countries as well as Europe and North America. Earlier this year, CyberCom began <a href="#">publishing</a> some of the group's open source tools on VirusTotal in an effort to raise detection rates, a list they have updated as recently this past month.</p> <p>According to a <a href="#">joint alert</a> put out by the U.S. and UK governments in February, the hacking group is "known to exploit publicly reported vulnerabilities" like Log4j and has also targeted public sector organizations and critical infrastructure across the globe, including the telecommunications, defense, and oil and gas sectors as well as local governments.</p> <p>SysAid rolled out <a href="#">patches</a> for the vulnerability in their cloud and on-premise products in January. Microsoft is advising organizations that use SysAid to ensure they have the most up to date versions of the software, review authentication logs for remote access infrastructure and upgrade to multifactor authentication where possible. The blog also includes 14 separate indicators of compromise for organizations to leverage for detection.</p>
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HEADLINE	08/25 Number published CVEs to surpass 2021?
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.scmagazine.com/news/threat-intelligence/the-number-of-cves-published-this-year-is-on-track-to-exceed-2021">https://www.scmagazine.com/news/threat-intelligence/the-number-of-cves-published-this-year-is-on-track-to-exceed-2021</a>
GIST	<p>The number of <a href="#">common vulnerabilities and exposures (CVEs)</a> published in the National Vulnerability Database (NVD) is up 5% at the halfway point of 2022 compared with the number of critical vulnerabilities at the same time last year (13%).</p> <p>Even though the figure is an increase over last year, <a href="#">Trustwave Spiderlabs' 2022 Telemetry Report</a> shows that the number is only 36% of the total published in 2021 and is still expected to increase between 5% and 13% over <a href="#">last year's CVEs</a>.</p> <p>But the news isn't all bad from the report. The author said companies are likely to patch their systems in a timely manner and are more aware of security than they were last year, with less than 10% of the organizations they scanned still being affected by critical vulnerabilities.</p> <p>"Key observations from this report show that companies finally understand the necessity of having a solid security posture," Jason Villaluna wrote.</p> <p>The top three weaknesses Spiderlabs researchers observed were common in command injection and remote code execution vulnerabilities.</p> <p>As new technologies are introduced, so too are the unintentional vulnerabilities that go unnoticed in the development process.</p> <p>"Threat actors continuously scan the internet to gain the advantage of those organizations with slow or outdated patching process," Villaluna wrote, adding that having a proactive approach to identifying and patching vulnerabilities is incredibly important to having a good security posture.</p>
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HEADLINE	08/26 LastPass hackers stole source code
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/lastpass-hackers-stole-source-code/">https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/lastpass-hackers-stole-source-code/</a>
GIST	<p>Password management giant <a href="#">LastPass</a> has revealed details of a security incident earlier this month in which proprietary information was stolen by threat actors.</p> <p>The firm, which claims to have over 33 million global users including more than 100,000 business accounts, said the intrusion took place two weeks ago.</p> <p>"We have determined that an unauthorized party gained access to portions of the LastPass development environment through a single compromised developer account and took portions of source code and some proprietary LastPass technical information. Our products and services are operating normally," <a href="#">it explained</a>.</p> <p>"In response to the incident, we have deployed containment and mitigation measures, and engaged a leading cybersecurity and forensics firm. While our investigation is ongoing, we have achieved a state of containment, implemented additional enhanced security measures, and see no further evidence of unauthorized activity."</p> <p>LastPass was at pains to point out that it has no evidence that customer data or encrypted password vaults were accessed in the breach, which was confined to the developer environment.</p> <p>"We never store or have knowledge of your Master Password," the firm said in an FAQ. "We utilize an industry standard Zero Knowledge architecture that ensures LastPass can never know or gain access to our customers' Master Password."</p> <p>As a result, there are no additional steps for customers to follow.</p>

	<p>This isn't the first security scare for LastPass customers. Back in 2015, threat actors <a href="#">managed to access</a> LastPass account email addresses, password reminders, "server per user salts," and authentication hashes.</p> <p>Acquired by LogMeIn for \$125m in the same year, LastPass <a href="#">announced</a> in 2021 that it would become a standalone company again.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/25 Kimsuky's malware only reach valid targets</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/how-kimsuky-hackers-ensure-their-malware-only-reach-valid-targets/">https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/how-kimsuky-hackers-ensure-their-malware-only-reach-valid-targets/</a>
GIST	<p>The North Korean 'Kimsuky' threat actors are going to great lengths to ensure that their malicious payloads are only downloaded by valid targets and not on the systems of security researchers.</p> <p>According to a Kaspersky report published today, the threat group has been employing new techniques to filter out invalid download requests since the start of 2022, when the group launched a new campaign against various targets in the Korean peninsula.</p> <p>The new safeguards implemented by Kimsuky are so effective that Kaspersky reports an inability to acquire the final payloads even after they are successfully connected to the threat actor's command and control server.</p> <p>A multi-stage validation scheme The attacks spotted by Kaspersky begin with a phishing email sent to politicians, diplomats, university professors, and journalists in North and South Korea.</p> <p>Kaspersky was able to compile a list of potential targets thanks to retrieved C2 scripts containing partial email addresses of targets.</p> <p>The emails contain a link that takes victims to a first-stage C2 server that checks and verifies a few parameters before delivering a malicious document. If the visitor doesn't match the list of targets, they are served an innocuous document.</p> <p>The parameters include the visitor's email address, OS (Windows is valid), and the file "[who].txt" that's dropped by the second-stage server.</p> <p>At the same time, the visitor's IP address is forwarded to the second-stage C2 server as a subsequent checking parameter.</p> <p>The document dropped by the first-stage C2 contains a malicious macro that connects the victim to the second-stage C2, fetches the next-stage payload, and runs it with the mshta.exe process.</p> <p>The payload is an .HTA file that also creates a scheduled task for auto-execution. Its function is to profile the victim by checking ProgramFiles folder paths, AV name, username, OS version, MS Office version, .NET framework version, and more.</p> <p>The fingerprint result is stored in a string ("chnome"), a copy is sent to the C2, and a new payload is fetched and registered with a persistence mechanism.</p> <p>The next payload is a VBS file that can take the victim to a legitimate blog or, if they're valid targets, take them to the next payload-download phase.</p>

	<p>“Interestingly, this C2 script generates a blog address based on the victim’s IP address. After calculating the MD5 hash of the victim’s IP address, it cuts off the last 20 characters and turns it into a blog address,” <a href="#">details Kaspersky</a>.</p> <p>“The author’s intent here is to operate a dedicated fake blog for each victim, thereby decreasing the exposure of their malware and infrastructure.”</p> <p>This is when the victim’s system is checked for the existence of the unusual “chnome” string, which was purposefully misspelled to serve as a unique validator that still doesn’t raise suspicions.</p> <p>Unfortunately, Kaspersky couldn’t continue from here and fetch the next stage payload, so whether that would be the final one or if there were most validation steps remains unknown.</p> <p>Kimsuky is a very sophisticated threat actor recently seen deploying <a href="#">custom malware</a> and using <a href="#">Google Chrome extensions</a> to steal emails from victims.</p> <p>The campaign highlighted by Kaspersky illustrates the elaborate techniques employed by the Korean hackers to hinder analysis and make their tracking much harder.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08.25 Twilio hackers grab 10,000 Okta credentials</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.darkreading.com/remote-workforce/twilio-hackers-okta-credentials-sprawling-supply-chain-attack">https://www.darkreading.com/remote-workforce/twilio-hackers-okta-credentials-sprawling-supply-chain-attack</a>
GIST	<p>The hackers who breached Twilio and Cloudflare earlier in August also infiltrated more than 130 other organizations in the same campaign, vacuuming up nearly 10,000 sets of Okta and two-factor authentication (2FA) credentials.</p> <p>That's according to an investigation from Group-IB, which found that several well-known organizations were among those targeted in a massive phishing campaign that it calls Oktapus. The lures were simple, such as fake notifications that users needed to reset their passwords. They were sent via texts with links to static phishing sites mirroring the Okta authentication page of each specific organization.</p> <p>"Despite using low-skill methods, [the group] was able to compromise a large number of well-known organizations," researchers said in a <a href="#">blog post today</a>. "Furthermore, once the attackers compromised an organization, they were quickly able to pivot and launch subsequent supply chain attacks, indicating that the attack was planned carefully in advance."</p> <p>Such was the case with the <a href="#">Twilio breach</a> that occurred Aug. 4. The attackers were able to social-engineer several employees into handing over their Okta credentials used for single sign-on across the organization, allowing them to gain access to internal systems, applications, and customer data. The breach affected about 25 downstream organizations that use Twilio's phone verification and other services — including Signal, which issued <a href="#">a statement</a> confirming that about 1,900 users could have had their phone numbers hijacked in the incident.</p> <p>The majority of the 130 companies targeted were SaaS and software companies in the US — unsurprising, given the <a href="#">supply chain nature of the attack</a>.</p> <p>For instance, additional victims in the campaign include email marketing firms Klaviyo and <a href="#">Mailchimp</a>. In both cases, the crooks made off with names, addresses, emails, and phone numbers of their cryptocurrency-related customers, including for Mailchimp customer DigitalOcean (which subsequently <a href="#">dropped the provider</a>).</p> <p>In <a href="#">Cloudflare's case</a>, some employees fell for the ruse, but the attack was thwarted thanks to the physical security keys issued to every employee that are required to access all internal applications.</p>



	<p>Lior Yaari, CEO and co-founder of Grip Security, notes that the extent and cause of the breach beyond Group IB's findings are still unknown, so additional victims could come to light.</p> <p>"Identifying all the users of a SaaS app is not always easy for a security team, especially those where users use their own logins and passwords," he warns. "Shadow SaaS discovery is not a simple problem, but there are solutions out there that can discover and reset user passwords for shadow SaaS."</p> <p>Time to Rethink IAM?</p> <p>On the whole, the success of the campaign illustrates the trouble with relying on humans to detect social engineering, and the gaps in existing <a href="#">identity and access management</a> (IAM) approaches.</p> <p>"The attack demonstrates how fragile IAM is today and why the industry should think about removing the burden of logins and passwords from employees who are susceptible to social engineering and sophisticated phishing attack," Yaari says. "The best proactive remediation effort companies can make is to have users reset all their passwords, <a href="#">especially Okta</a>."</p> <p>The incident also points out that enterprises increasingly rely on their employees' access to mobile endpoints to be productive in the modern distributed workforce, creating a rich, new phishing ground for attackers like the Oktapus actors, according to Richard Melick, director of threat reporting at Zimperium.</p> <p>"From phishing to network threats, malicious applications to compromised devices, it's critical for enterprises to acknowledge that the mobile attack surface is the largest unprotected vector to their data and access," he wrote in an emailed statement.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/25 Next problem: cross-platform ransomware</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.darkreading.com/threat-intelligence/cross-platform-ransomware-spikes-problem">https://www.darkreading.com/threat-intelligence/cross-platform-ransomware-spikes-problem</a>
GIST	<p>Two emerging ransomware gangs, known as RedAlert and Monster, have adopted cross-platform capabilities to make attacks easier to execute against multiple operating systems and environments. It's a shining example of a snowballing trend toward multiplatform ransomware attacks, for which defenders need to gear up.</p> <p>One of the new threat groups, referred to as RedAlert or N13V, creates executables in a Linux-specific version of C, and also supports VMware's enterprise-class ESXi hypervisor. The other threat group, Monster, uses an older cross-platform language, Delphi, which makes it easy to tailor the attack for a specific victim's configuration.</p> <p>The ability to impact a variety of client operating systems within a single victim's environment started gaining steam in 2021, according to an advisory from Kaspersky published on Thursday. The Conti group, for example, allows affiliates to access a Linux variant of its ransomware, which also allows targeting of systems running VMware's ESXi hypervisor.</p> <p><b>Deploy Once, Affect Many</b></p> <p>There are several reasons for the trend: For one, it cuts down on labor. Attackers need only to write a certain program functionality once, and are then be able to use the resulting code to script the attacks against multiple targets, Kaspersky's advisory stated.</p> <p>"We've gotten quite used to the ransomware groups deploying malware written in cross-platform language," Jornt van der Wiel, senior security researcher at Kaspersky's Global Research and Analysis Team, said in a statement. "These days, cybercriminals [have] learned to adjust their malicious code written in plain programming languages for joint attacks, making security specialists elaborate on ways to detect and prevent the ransomware attempts."</p> <p>Other benefits to cross-platform attacks is the ability to hamper analysis, plus the ability to customize attacks to specific victim environments. Groups can use command lines to customize an attack to prevent</p>

code from running on ESXi environments, for instance — or conversely, to focus on certain kinds of client virtual machines.

"Recently, their goal is to damage as many systems as possible by adapting their malware code to several OS at the time," [Kaspersky stated in its blog post on 2022 ransomware trends](#). "[But] there are a few other reasons to use a cross-platform language."

Kaspersky also noted that ransomware gangs are getting better and better at adapting n-day exploits, which it dubbed "1-day" exploits, to multiplatform attacks. N-days refer to just-reported vulnerabilities that cybercriminals race to exploit before companies have time to patch them.

"[Such broad functionality] is something we usually see in commercial exploits," the company said, noting that one of the two exploits covered in its latest advisory was used "in the wild" during an attack on a large retailer in the Asia-Pacific region.

The move to cross-platform is borne out of necessity, researchers said. In the first half of 2022, as the value of cryptocurrencies plummeted, [ransomware attacks declined](#), with cybersecurity firm Arctic Wolf reporting a drop of about a quarter. While the trend did not hold for other cybercrimes, [such as investment scams and business email compromises](#), the headwinds for ransomware groups meant that threat actors have had to find ways to increase their success.

### **Rust and GoLang Gain Steam for Ransomware Coding**

A common way that groups have tackled the process of adding cross-platform capabilities is to write the code in a language that supports other platforms, such as Rust or Golang, [Kaspersky noted in its Aug. 24 advisory](#).

The BlackCat ransomware program, for instance, is written in Rust, a successor to C, which has gained traction because of its improved security features.

"Due to Rust cross-compilation capabilities, it did not take [a] long time for us to find BlackCat samples that work on Linux as well," Kaspersky said in the advisory. "The Linux sample of BlackCat is very similar to the Windows one."

Ransomware written in Rust and Go also make analysis harder for malware researchers, since tools to analyze those languages are not as sophisticated as analyzing programs written in the common C programming language, Kaspersky noted.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/25 Ransomware dominates threat landscape</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.helpnetsecurity.com/2022/08/25/ransomware-dominates-threat-landscape/">https://www.helpnetsecurity.com/2022/08/25/ransomware-dominates-threat-landscape/</a>
GIST	<p>Acronis researchers have concluded that ransomware continues to be the number one threat to large and medium-sized businesses, including government organizations. Nearly half of all reported breaches during the first half of 2022 involved stolen credentials, which enable phishing and ransomware campaigns. Findings underscore the need for more holistic approaches to cybersecurity.</p> <p>To extract credentials and other sensitive information, cybercriminals use phishing and malicious emails as their preferred infection vectors. Nearly one percent of all emails contain malicious links or files, and more than one-quarter (26.5%) of all emails were delivered to the users inbox (not blocked by Microsoft365) and then were removed by Acronis email security.</p> <p>Moreover, the research reveals how cybercriminals also use malware and target unpatched software vulnerabilities to extract data and hold organizations hostage. Further complicating the cybersecurity threat landscape is the proliferation of attacks on non-traditional entry avenues. Attackers have made cryptocurrencies and decentralized finance systems a priority of late. Successful breaches using these various routes have resulted in the loss of billions of dollars and terabytes of exposed data.</p>

“Today’s cyberthreats are constantly evolving and evading traditional security measures,” said [Candid Wüest](#), Acronis VP of Cyber Protection Research. “Organizations of all sizes need a holistic approach to cybersecurity that integrates everything from anti-malware to email-security and vulnerability-assessment capabilities. Cybercriminals are becoming too sophisticated and the results of attacks too dire to leave it to single-layered approaches and point solutions.”

### **Critical data points reveal complex threat landscape**

As reliance on the cloud increases, attackers have homed in on different entryways to cloud-based networks. Cybercriminals increased their focus on Linux operating systems and MSPs and their network of SMB customers. The threat landscape is shifting, and companies must keep pace.

Ransomware is worsening, even more so than we predicted.

- Ransomware gangs, like [Conti](#) and [Lapsus\\$](#), are inflicting serious damage.
- The Conti gang demanded \$10 million in ransom from the Costa Rican government and has published much of the 672 GB of data it stole.
- Lapsus\$ stole 1 TB of data and leaked credentials of over 70,000 NVIDIA users. The same gang also stole 30 GB worth of T-Mobile’s source code.
- The U.S. Department of State is concerned, offering up to \$15 million for information about the leadership and co-conspirators of Conti.

The use of phishing, malicious emails and websites, and malware continues to grow.

- Six hundred malicious email campaigns made their way across the internet in the first half of 2022.
- 58% of the emails were phishing attempts.
- Another 28% of those emails featured malware.
- The business world is increasingly distributed, and in Q2 2022, an average of 8.3% of endpoints tried to access malicious URLs.

More cybercriminals are focusing on cryptocurrencies and decentralized finance (DeFi) platforms. By exploiting flaws in smart contracts or stealing recovery phrases and passwords with malware or [phishing attempts](#), hackers have wormed their way into crypto wallets and exchanges alike.

- Cyberattacks have contributed to a loss of more than \$60 billion in DeFi currency since 2012.
- \$44 billion of that vanished during the last 12 months.

Unpatched vulnerabilities of exposed services is another common infection vector—just ask Kaseya. To that end, companies like Microsoft, Google, and Adobe have emphasized software patches and transparency around publicly submitted vulnerabilities. These patches likely helped stem the tide of 79 new exploits each month.

### **Breaches leave distress in their wake**

Cybercriminals often [demand ransoms](#) or outright steal funds from their targets. But companies do not suffer challenges only to their bottom lines. Attacks often cause downtime and other service-level breaches, impacting a company’s reputation and customer experience.

- In 2021 alone, the FBI attributed a total loss of \$2.4 billion to business email compromise.
- Cyberattacks caused 36% of downtime in 2021.

The current cybersecurity threat landscape requires a multi-layered solution that combines anti-malware, EDR, DLP, email security, vulnerability assessment, patch management, RMM, and backup capabilities all in one place. The integration of these various components gives companies a better chance of avoiding cyberattacks, mitigating the damage of successful attacks, and retaining data that might have been altered or stolen in the process.

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HEADLINE	08/25 New Golang ransomware ‘Agenda’
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.trendmicro.com/en_us/research/22/h/new-golang-ransomware-agenda-customizes-attacks.html">https://www.trendmicro.com/en_us/research/22/h/new-golang-ransomware-agenda-customizes-attacks.html</a>

We recently discovered a new piece of targeted [ransomware](#) that was created in the Go programming language and that explicitly targeted one of our customers. This was evidenced by the specific email addresses and credentials the ransomware used. Malware written in the Go language (aka Golang) has become [common](#) among threat actors. One possible reason for this uptick in popularity is that Go statically compiles necessary libraries, making security analysis much harder.

Our investigation revealed that the new ransomware in question targeted enterprises in Asia and Africa. Based on dark web posts by a user named “Qilin” (who seems to be connected to the ransomware distributors) and through ransom notes, the ransomware is called “Agenda.”

Agenda can reboot systems in safe mode, attempts to stop many server-specific processes and services, and has multiple modes to run. The samples of the ransomware that we collected were customized for each victim, and they included unique company IDs and leaked account details.

### **Targets**

All collected samples were 64-bit Windows PE (Portable Executable) files written in Go, and they were aimed at Windows-based systems. The group distributing the malware was targeting healthcare and education organizations in Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, and Thailand. Every ransomware sample was customized for the intended victim. Our investigation showed that the samples had leaked accounts, customer passwords, and unique company IDs used as extensions of encrypted files.

We believe that Qilin (or the Agenda ransomware group) offers affiliates options to customize configurable binary payloads for each victim, including details such as company ID, RSA key, and processes and services to kill before the data encryption. Also, the ransom amount requested is different per company, ranging from US\$50,000 to US\$800,000.

### **Similarities with other ransomware**

We noticed some similarities between Agenda and the [Black Basta](#), Black Matter, and [REvil](#) (aka Sodinokibi) ransomware.

In terms of payment sites and the implementation of user verification on a Tor site, Agenda is very similar to Black Basta and Black Matter. Meanwhile, Agenda shares with Black Basta and REvil the same functionality of changing Windows passwords and rebooting in safe mode using this command:

```
C:\windows\system32\bcdedit.exe /set safeboot{current} network
```

### **Analysis and notable features**

The Agenda ransomware is a 64-bit Windows PE file written in Go. Go programs are cross-platform and completely standalone, meaning they will execute properly even without a Go interpreter installed on a system. This is possible since Go statically compiles necessary libraries (packages).

Agenda also deploys a detection evasion technique during encryption: It changes the default user's password and enables automatic login with the new login credentials. This feature can be enabled using the -safe command-line argument. Similar to [REvil](#), Agenda reboots the victim's machine in safe mode and then proceeds with the encryption routine upon reboot.

### **Conclusion and solutions**

Ransomware continues to evolve, developing more sophisticated methods and techniques to trap organizations. Our investigation shows how the new targeted ransomware Agenda is written in the Go language, making it harder to detect and analyze.

This ransomware has techniques for evading detection by taking advantage of the “safe mode” feature of a device to proceed with its encryption routine unnoticed. The ransomware also takes advantage of local accounts to log on as spoofed users and execute the ransomware binary, further encrypting other machines if the login attempt is successful. It also terminates numerous processes and services, and ensures persistence by injecting a DLL into svchost.exe.

End users and organizations alike can mitigate the risk of infection from ransomware like Agenda by following these security best practices:

- **Enable multifactor authentication (MFA) to prevent attackers from performing lateral movement inside a network.**
- **Adhere to the [3-2-1 rule](#) when backing up important files. This involves creating three backup copies on two different file formats, with one of the copies stored in a separate location.**
- **Patch and [update systems regularly](#). It's important to keep operating systems and applications up to date, preventing malicious actors from exploiting any software vulnerabilities.**

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HEADLINE	08/25 FBI probe: prolific Instagram sextortionist
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.forbes.com/sites/thomasbrewster/2022/08/25/instagram-sextortionist-fbi-investigation/?sh=3c276b5f6fc3">https://www.forbes.com/sites/thomasbrewster/2022/08/25/instagram-sextortionist-fbi-investigation/?sh=3c276b5f6fc3</a>
GIST	<p>The FBI is trying to unmask a prolific Instagram extortionist who posed as a Californian woman and tricked at least 30 teenage boys and young men into sending nude images, only to be told the photos would be shared with their families and friends unless they paid a given sum. In one case, an 18-year-old from Ventura County, California, gave over \$1,500 in Apple gift cards to the blackmailer and subsequently took his own life, according to a previously unreported court filing obtained by <i>Forbes</i>.</p> <p>The scammer has been carrying out the sextortion campaign since May of last year and their identity is not yet known. They've been particularly aggressive in pursuing payment from victims, in one case threatening violence against a 19-year-old and his family. The scammer also hacked into at least two victims' Instagram accounts, telling them to hand over passwords to stop their photos from being shared, according to the FBI. The victims told police they tried to get their accounts back but were unsuccessful.</p> <p>Both were unavailable when checked by <i>Forbes</i>.</p> <p>Law enforcement has so far been unable to identify the perpetrator of the scam. But search warrants did return a number of Google Voice messages that suggest there may be more than two dozen additional victims. Both the Justice Department and the Ventura County police declined to comment on the case. The FBI did not respond to a request for comment.</p> <p>With more people working from home in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and spending more time online as a result, the FBI has documented what it describes as a "huge increase" in reports of sextortion. The agency's Atlanta office, for example, has received 50 such reports so far in 2022—more than double the full-year total for 2021. Meanwhile, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), which documented 12,070 reports of sextortion and other forms of <a href="#">online enticement</a> in 2018, saw 44,155 in 2021. Elsewhere, Cybertip.ca, Canada's national tip line for child exploitation, told <i>Forbes</i> it had opened case files for 500 claimed instances of sextortion in the last month alone.</p> <p>"It's a pandemic," says John Pizzuro, a former 25-year veteran investigator of child abuse crimes with the New Jersey State Police. "We can't even keep up with the amount of cases . . . New Jersey's increase has been 400% over the last four years, and that goes across the U.S. and across the world."</p> <p>Also notable in the rise of sextortion is the target demographic: teenage boys. The Canadian Center for Child Protection said that in the cases it investigated in July, where the gender of a victim was known, 92% involved boys or young men. The FBI <a href="#">says</a> that in the majority of cases it has been investigating, the victims are males between the ages of 14 and 17.</p> <p>That represents a shift in targeting. Six years ago, NCMEC <a href="#">data</a> showed that 78% of sextortion reports between 2013 and 2016 involved female children, compared to 15% involving males.</p>



While the financial cost of sextortion isn't astronomical compared to other cybercrimes—standing at \$13.6 million from 18,000 cases reported to the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center in 2021, compared to \$1 billion for romance scams—this form of online extortion is one that has repeatedly proven deadly.

The death in Ventura County was the second linked to sextortion in California alone in a three-month period. In February, a 17-year-old from San Jose, California, took his own life after a cybercriminal blackmailed him using an intimate photo the scammer tricked him into sharing. The FBI is still trying to find the perpetrator in that investigation, according to [CNN](#). And in February, in Manitoba, Canada, a 17-year-old also took his own life just three hours after being blackmailed over nude photos.

Attention is now turning to tech giants and what they're doing to protect its young users. The Canadian Centre for Child Protection says the majority of sextortion cases it reviewed this July were perpetrated over Instagram and Snapchat, 42% and 38% respectively. As an example of what the Canadian organization called an Instagram failing, it identified at least 19 unique accounts used to sextort victims all using the same profile picture, "something we would expect their systems to intercept," says Lianna McDonald, the nonprofit's executive director. (Meta did not respond to a request for more information on that finding).

Instagram's parent company, Meta, and Snapchat declined to comment on the rise in sextortion scams on their platforms. Meta pointed to its support of StopNCII.org, which helps people keep tabs on where their photos are shared, while Snapchat said it had various measures to stop teens chatting with people they didn't know.

McDonald believes regulations are required to force tech companies to do more. "Many network and platform design changes could be made to tackle these issues, but our experience has been that serious change won't happen without regulatory intervention," she says. "Why? Because changing some of the fundamental design issues that create favorable conditions for predation on many social media platforms would likely undermine aspects of their current business models."

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## Terrorism, Extremism

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HEADLINE	08/26 Iran-US skirmishes eastern Syria on rise
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/iran-us-skirmishes-highlight-rivalry-eastern-syria-2022-08-26/">https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/iran-us-skirmishes-highlight-rivalry-eastern-syria-2022-08-26/</a>
GIST	<p>AMMAN, Aug 26 (Reuters) - Deadly skirmishes have been on the rise in recent days between U.S. forces and Iran-aligned militias in Syria's oil-rich east, where both have carved out strategic footholds.</p> <p>Here is a closer look at their rival zones of influence in the desert province of Deir al-Zor, where rocket, mortar and drone attacks have increased - just as negotiations over the revival of a nuclear deal between Iran and the West come to a head. <a href="#">read more</a></p> <p><b>A PROVINCE DIVIDED</b></p> <p>Syria's eastern Deir al-Zor is a 33,000 square kilometre (12, 741.37 square mile) desert province, divided diagonally by the Euphrates River and mostly populated by tribes that share kinship with neighbouring Iraq.</p> <p>Syria's government and its backers on one side, and the United States and its Syrian allies on the other, fought separately to oust Islamic State fighters from the zone.</p> <p>Now, the U.S. forces and their allies on the ground - the Kurdish-dominated Syrian Democratic Forces - are based in two large oil and gas fields in the province's eastern half.</p> <p>The fields - locally known as Al Omar and Conoco - host most of the 900 U.S. servicemen deployed in Syria.</p>



The provincial capital of Deir al-Zor, the strategic border town of Albu Kamal and the area south and west of the river are held by Syria's government and allied fighters, with the Iranian units among them seen as the most elite.

These fighters have also taken up bases on a collection of river islands known as Hweija Sakr, which they use as a launching pad for attacks on U.S. forces across the river.

#### FIVE YEARS OF TENSIONS

The United States says its presence there aims to ensure the lasting defeat of IS, but skirmishes with Iran-backed groups have sporadically broken out over the last five years.

In the first attack in June 2017, a suspected Iranian drone targeted the outskirts of the Tanf garrison, a U.S. outpost at the intersection of Syria's borders with both Iraq and Jordan.

U.S. warplanes responded with strikes against Shi'ite militias closing in on the base.

Since then, Iran-aligned groups have fired mortars, Iranian-manufactured rockets, and small unmanned drones at Tanf and the oil and gas fields.

The U.S.-led coalition has responded with air strikes by jets and helicopters, typically targeting weapons depots or other infrastructure.

In some cases, the United States has responded to rocket attacks on its troops in neighbouring Iraq by bombing positions along the Syrian-Iraqi border hosting Iraqi armed groups tied to Iran.

#### EXPANDING IRANIAN INFLUENCE

Alongside Russia, Iran and its proxies have been instrumental in helping Syrian President Bashar al-Assad regain most of the territory his forces lost since conflict erupted in 2011.

That has allowed them to retain and build up their zones of influence in far-flung parts of the country even after battles have subsided: from the northern city of Aleppo, recaptured by government-aligned forces in late 2016, to the vast desert zones in Homs and Hama and the suburbs of the capital Damascus.

In particular, Iran has extended support in energy and mineral exploitation to Syria, helping rehabilitate power plants and extract phosphate.

Its troops and their allies retain effective control of Syria's eastern front with Iraq, where units from Iran's elite Quds Force are suspected to be based, and its western border with Lebanon.

That corridor allows Tehran to transfer people, goods and military equipment across several countries - prompting serious concern in Israel, which has carried out its own air attacks against Iranian forces and their allies in Syria.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/26 Somalia vows 'total war' on al-Shabab</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://apnews.com/article/africa-somalia-mogadishu-al-shabab-6f5af4f3fb2671e108727b6ec5f4504a?utm_source=homepage&amp;utm_medium=TopNews&amp;utm_campaign=position 7">https://apnews.com/article/africa-somalia-mogadishu-al-shabab-6f5af4f3fb2671e108727b6ec5f4504a?utm_source=homepage&amp;utm_medium=TopNews&amp;utm_campaign=position 7</a>
GIST	<p>MOGADISHU, Somalia (AP) — Hell began at sunset.</p> <p>It was a Friday evening in Somalia's capital. The patrons of the Hayat hotel had finished their latest prayers and settled in for coffee, tea or dinner. Families, businesspeople and government workers were there — some of the many who see the promise of their country rebuilding from decades of war.</p>

Hotels are refuges in Mogadishu, but targets, too. The [al-Shabab extremist](#) group, affiliated with al-Qaida, for years has carried out complex attacks on them, starting with explosions and holding out for hours as a handful of fighters exchanges gunfire with security forces until a bloody morning end.

This time, about 35 hours followed the moment an explosion shattered the Hayat's peace. It was the longest such attack in Somalia's history.

[Last weekend's siege](#) could be a turning point for the Horn of Africa nation and its quest for more security. In the days before the attack, new President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud had vowed an offensive against al-Shabab to dislodge it from the large sections of Somalia it has controlled for years.

Horried Somalis then watched as 21 people at the Hayat were killed and some dismembered, their remains published by al-Shabab in propaganda videos.

The attack was "a window into the mindset of today's Al-Shabab and how it has morphed into a more dark, sinister, and nihilistic movement," the Somali Wire newsletter wrote Wednesday, noting that the hotel was not a "normal" target but "a modest hotel whose clientele were mostly ordinary people."

Now Somalia's president vows "total war."

In a national address this week, he spoke with new determination. Al-Shabab "is like a deadly snake in your clothes," Mohamud said. "There is no solution other than to kill it before it kills you."

Standing in the rubble of his hotel still marked with blood and flesh, owner Abdulkadir Mohamud Nur could barely contemplate more death.

The 60-year-old was overwhelmed as he recounted his helplessness at being a short walk from the hotel for prayers when the attack began. Calls quickly flooded his phone. A suicide bomber had detonated at a side gate, callers said, and gunmen overran security forces and shot at everyone they found.

"I couldn't get closer to the hotel because of the exchange of gunfire," Nur told The Associated Press.

It was chaos. One survivor, Ibrahim Bashir Ali, joined frantic hotel patrons trying to hide in the hall where afternoon coffee had been served. Amid the gunfire, he saw the attackers wearing "battle fatigues." Al-Shabab fighters at times disguise themselves in security uniforms.

"There were hand grenades that made everyone petrified," Ali said. He broke two windows and leaped out the second to escape, injuring himself along the way.

Nur, the hotel owner, immediately thought of his two brothers, Abdirahman and Shuaib, who had come to have lunch with him and afternoon tea. They were still inside, but he dared not call them.

"When such attacks happen, people are advised not to call those whom they think might be at the scene of an attack," Nur said. "The ringing phone might bring the attention of the attackers."

It was wisdom drawn from years of watching al-Shabab attacks on the capital.

Later, Nur learned from hotel colleagues that Abdirahman had been killed near the reception area while looking for a place to hide. And on the second day of the attack, he found Shuaib's body himself.

"We trust the fate of God," Nur said, his face pressed with grief.

The long time it took for Somali security forces to end the siege, and even communicate among themselves, has been questioned and criticized. At first, a paramilitary force trained by Turkey deployed to the hotel but was repulsed by the attackers. Then a group trained by U.S. forces arrived and managed to start rescuing survivors on the ground floor while containing the gunmen.

	<p>Somalia's prime minister, Hamza Abdi Barre, says those who failed in their response to the attack will be punished. Security forces did not comment.</p> <p>The four-story hotel, in a highly fortified area near the international airport and government offices, has been shattered. Rebuilding, like everything else in today's global economy, would be expensive with the rising costs of construction materials.</p> <p>And yet 67 employees depended on the hotel, and on its owner, a reminder of the fragility in Somalia that remains.</p> <p>"I'm wondering how these people will continue their lives," Nur said.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/25 US sends a message to Iran</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/us-sends-message-iran-counterattacks-syria/story?id=88834931">https://abcnews.go.com/International/us-sends-message-iran-counterattacks-syria/story?id=88834931</a>
GIST	<p>The United States said Wednesday that although it "does not seek conflict with Iran," it will continue to "defend" its troops against Tehran-backed militias in Syria.</p> <p>Three U.S. service members were injured in separate rocket attacks on two facilities housing American troops in northeastern Syria on Wednesday, prompting U.S. forces to respond, according to a statement from the U.S. military's Central Command.</p> <p>Beginning at approximately 7:20 p.m. local time, several rockets landed inside the perimeter of Mission Support Site Conoco. Shortly after, more rockets landed in the vicinity of Mission Support Site Green Village. Both sites are located near large oil and gas fields in northeastern Syria. One service member at Mission Support Site Conoco was treated for a minor injury and returned to duty, while two others were under evaluation for minor injuries, CENTCOM said.</p> <p>Speaking with ABC News, a U.S. official characterized the injuries as "very minor."</p> <p>CENTCOM said U.S. forces responded over the last 24 hours with Apache attack helicopters, AC-130 gunships, and 155mm artillery, "resulting in four enemy fighters killed and seven enemy rocket launchers destroyed."</p> <p>"We will respond appropriately and proportionally to attacks on our servicemembers," Gen. Michael "Erik" Kurilla, commander of CENTCOM, said in a statement on Thursday. "No group will strike at our troops with impunity. We will take all necessary measures to defend our people."</p> <p>Colin Kahl, the U.S. undersecretary of defense for policy, was asked about the latest exchange in Syria during a press briefing on Wednesday afternoon in Washington, D.C. Kahl told reporters he did not have any details to share at the time but noted: "As a general matter, we're not going to hesitate to defend ourselves."</p> <p>Militias allegedly backed by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, an elite branch of the Iranian Armed Forces, have targeted American troops in Syria this month and several other times over the past year, since establishing a foothold in the region while fighting in support of the Syrian government amid the country's ongoing civil war.</p> <p>Iran routinely denies arming, funding and training militias that target U.S. forces in Syria, despite weapons and equipment linking back to them, officials said.</p> <p>On Aug. 15, Iran-backed militias allegedly launched drones targeting the al-Tanf Garrison used by U.S. forces in the energy-rich Homs province in central Syria. At that time, CENTCOM described the attack as causing "zero casualties and no damage."</p>

In response, on Tuesday, U.S. forces carried out airstrikes targeting infrastructure facilities used by Iran-backed militias in eastern Syria's oil-rich Deir ez-Zor province, near the country's border with Iraq. CENTCOM said the strikes came at the orders of President Joe Biden and were "proportionate, deliberate action intended to limit the risk of escalation and minimize the risk of casualties."

CENTCOM did not identify the specific targets or offer any casualty figures from Tuesday's strikes. However, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a U.K.-based war monitoring group, said the U.S. strikes targeted the Ayash Camp run by the Fatemiyoun Brigade, a militia made up of Afghan Shiite refugees sent by Iran to fight in the Syrian Civil War alongside Syrian government troops. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported that at least six Syrian and foreign militants were killed in the strikes.

Nasser Kanaani, spokesman for the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, issued a statement condemning the U.S. strikes "against the people and infrastructure of Syria" on Tuesday. He denied that Tehran had any connections to the targets.

There was no immediate acknowledgment by Syria of Tuesday's strikes.

Speaking to reporters on Wednesday, Kahl said the Aug. 15 attack fueled concerns that "Iran intends to do more of this and we wanted to disabuse them of any sense that that was a good idea."

Unlike Wednesday's counterattack, the U.S. strikes on Tuesday were "carefully calibrated" to avoid killing any civilians or militants, according to Kahl. He said there were originally 11 intended targets but only nine were struck due to evidence that people may be near two of the locations.

The counterattacks and strikes came as Biden seeks to revive a 2015 nuclear deal with Iran that his predecessor abandoned.

Kahl said the negotiations with Tehran to resume its compliance with the 2015 nuclear deal "has nothing to do with our willingness and resolve to defend ourselves."

"The threats that they engage in against our people in the region or elsewhere, are not linked to wherever we end up on the nuclear deal," he told reporters. "And I think the strike last night was a pretty clear communication to the Iranians that these things are all on different tracks."

Since 2014, the U.S. has led a coalition of countries conducting strikes targeting the Islamic State group in Syria. U.S. ground forces entered Syria in 2015. In more recent years, the American-led coalition has also launched strikes targeting the Syrian government's forces and allies, mainly in defense of the Syrian Democratic Forces, a U.S.-backed alliance of Kurdish and Arab militias that was formed as part of the campaign against ISIS.

What started as a local protest movement in Syria's southern city of Dara'a expanded into a full-fledged civil war by 2012. ISIS, which grew out of al-Qaeda in Iraq, took root in northern and eastern Syria in 2013 after seizing swaths of territory in neighboring Iraq. The jihadist group is fighting to overthrow Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's regime and establish a caliphate.

The Syrian Civil War has pulled in the United States, Russia, Iran and almost all of Syria's neighbors. It has become the largest humanitarian crisis since World War II, according to the United Nations.

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## Suspicious, Unusual

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HEADLINE	08/25 Some Seattle areas hit harder by heatwaves
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/why-some-seattle-neighborhoods-are-hit-harder-by-heat-waves/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/why-some-seattle-neighborhoods-are-hit-harder-by-heat-waves/</a>

When extreme heat bears down on the Seattle area, communities of color and low-income neighborhoods are more likely to experience the brunt of high temperatures.

Across the United States, temperatures soar in [areas with fewer trees](#), [more paved surfaces](#), tall buildings, [large industrial parks](#) and major thoroughfares — neighborhoods [where marginalized communities disproportionately live](#).

On Thursday, daytime temperatures are [forecast to hit a high of 90 at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport](#), but the [heat will be unevenly felt](#) across King County.

Race and wealth are critical factors defining whether Washington residents swelter in the sun or enjoy temperate summer days, said Edgar Frank, political director of Familias Unidas por la Justicia, an independent farmworker union based in Burlington.

For essential workers more likely to be exposed to high temperatures, such as agricultural laborers and fast-food workers, extreme heat poses a major health hazard. In the Pacific Northwest, where in-home cooling systems are relatively limited, lower-income renters are [less likely to have air conditioning](#).

“This goes back to environmental racism and who bears the brunt of climate and environment injustice,” Frank said. “These are sacrificial zones. These are the people who will bear the brunt so the rest of us can live a little better.”

In Beacon Hill, where census data show about three in four residents identify as a person of color, not everyone can afford to purchase air conditioners and fans, said Maria Batayola, the environmental justice coordinator at the Seattle-based nonprofit El Centro de la Raza, which serves Latino and other diverse communities.

Neighbors find affordable ways to stay cool, like hanging heavy bed sheets or shiny aluminum foil against windows, Batayola said. Washington state last year [expanded its energy assistance program](#) to help low-income residents secure air conditioning.

But that alone isn’t enough, said Esther Min, director for environmental health research and partnerships at Front and Centered, a statewide environmental justice coalition led by communities of color.

Marginalized communities that have experienced historical disinvestment need more permanent [climate resilience projects](#), she said, such as green spaces with trees and community centers with cooling.

A [2020 study](#) published in the scientific journal Climate found that across 108 cities in the United States, the vast majority of formerly redlined areas experience hotter surface temperatures than non-redlined neighborhoods, in some cases by as much as 12 degrees Fahrenheit.

In Seattle, the difference between the coolest and hottest neighborhoods could be as much as 14.5 degrees, according [to a 2019 NPR analysis](#) of surface thermal data from NASA and U.S. Geological Survey satellite imagery from summer days in the last decade. NPR reported a moderate correlation between heat and income in Seattle.

The same day 98.1-degree heat hit the Georgetown neighborhood, where the median household income is about \$52,100, residents in Magnolia, where the median household income is about \$217,900, experienced about 84.4-degree temperatures, NPR found.

Areas like the Chinatown International District, the Central District, swaths of North Seattle and Beacon Hill, New Holly and other parts of Greater Duwamish were hotter compared to other neighborhoods, according to NPR’s analysis.

Excessive heat can trigger serious health issues like heat stroke, particularly for older people and people with chronic conditions like [heart disease](#) or [obesity](#). Heat can also [worsen respiratory symptoms](#) like

asthma. Who develops chronic health issues — and who can get treatment for it — is heavily [correlated with income](#).

Extreme heat [can also be deadly](#). During the unprecedented heat wave that hit the Pacific Northwest last year, about 800 people died across Oregon, Washington and British Columbia. In King County, there were at least [34 heat-related deaths](#) reported by the end of last summer.

Last month, when Seattle [set a record](#) of six straight days of temperatures above 90 degrees, the state saw [at least nine heat-related deaths](#).

Fueled by climate change, [heat streaks](#) are becoming longer. Seattle is experiencing years that have at least [seven 90+ degree days](#) more frequently. Extreme heat events are [expected to become more](#) common across the Pacific Northwest as a result of human-caused greenhouse gas emissions.

County and city officials are well aware of the uneven impacts of extreme heat. Last year, the county [released a map of high temperatures](#) recorded in July 2020, showing the difference between some areas varied by more than 23 degrees.

Areas of South King County, including Auburn, Kent, Renton and Burien, experienced particularly high temperatures in the afternoons and evenings.

In response to last year's heat wave, King County planted trees, built bus shelters and increased its volunteer network to better relay emergency heat information in multiple languages.

In June, King County officials announced it would develop an [extreme heat mitigation plan](#). The Federal Emergency Management Agency recently awarded about \$130,000 to the county to fund the work, according to county spokesperson Doug Williams.

County officials plan to focus on a [number of strategies](#) to deal with extreme heat, such as increasing tree canopies, adding water features and cooling centers to neighborhoods, expanding the use of green roofs and updating urban planning and building codes to improve heat resilience.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/25 Study: dangerous heat likely hit more often</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/Technology/wireStory/dangerous-heat-predicted-hit-times-future-88843755">https://abcnews.go.com/Technology/wireStory/dangerous-heat-predicted-hit-times-future-88843755</a>
GIST	<p>What's considered officially "dangerous heat" in coming decades will likely hit much of the world at least three times more often as <a href="#">climate change</a> worsens, according to a new study.</p> <p>In much of Earth's wealthy mid-latitudes, spiking temperatures and humidity that feel like 103 degrees (39.4 degrees Celsius) or higher -- now an occasional summer shock — statistically should happen 20 to 50 times a year by mid-century, said a study Monday in the journal <a href="#">Communications Earth &amp; Environment</a>.</p> <p>By 2100, that brutal heat index may linger for most of the summer for places like the U.S. Southeast, the study's author said.</p> <p>And it's far worse for the sticky tropics. The study said a heat index considered "extremely dangerous" where the feels-like heat index exceeds 124 degrees (51 degrees Celsius) — now something that rarely happens — will likely strike a tropical belt that includes India one to four weeks a year by century's end.</p> <p>"So that's kind of the scary thing about this," said study author Lucas Zeppetello, a Harvard climate scientist. "That's something where potentially billions of people are going to be exposed to extremely dangerous levels of heat very regularly. So something that's gone from virtually never happening before will go to something that is happening every year."</p>



Zeppetello and colleagues used more than 1,000 computer simulations to look at the probabilities of two different levels of high heat -- heat indexes of 103 degrees (39.4 Celsius) and above 124 degrees (51 Celsius), which are dangerous and extremely dangerous thresholds according to the [U.S. National Weather Service](#). They calculated for the years 2050 and 2100 and compared that to how often that heat happened each year across the world from 1979 to 1998.

The study found a three- to ten-fold increase in 103-degree heat in the mid-latitudes even in the unlikely best-case scenario of global warming limited to only 3.6 degrees (2 degrees Celsius) since pre-industrial times -- the less stringent of two international goals.

There's only a 5% chance for warming to be that low and that infrequent, the study found. What's more likely, according to the study, is that the 103-degree heat will steam the tropics "during most days of each typical year" by 2100.

Chicago hit that 103 degree heat index level only four times from 1979 to 1998. But the study's most likely scenario shows Chicago hitting that hot-and-sticky threshold 11 times a year by the end of the century.

Heat waves are one of the new four horsemen of apocalyptic climate change, along with sea level rise, water scarcity and changes in the overall ecosystem, said Zeppetello, who did much of the research at University of Washington state during the [warming-charged 2021 heat wave](#) that shattered records and killed thousands.

"Sadly, the horrific predictions shown in this study are credible," climate scientist Jennifer Francis of the Woodwell Climate Research Center, who was not part of the study team, said in an email. "The past two summers have provided a window into our steamy future, with lethal heat waves in Europe, China, northwestern North America, India, the south-central U.S., the U.K., central Siberia, and even New England. Already hot places will become uninhabitable as heat indices exceed dangerous thresholds, affecting humans and ecosystems alike. Areas where extreme heat is now rare will also suffer increasingly, as infrastructure and living things are ill-adapted to the crushing heat."

The study focuses on the heat index and that's smart because it's not just heat but the combination with humidity that hurts health, said Harvard School of Public Health professor Dr. Renee Salas, who is an emergency room physician.

"As the heat index rises, it becomes harder and harder to cool our bodies," Salas, who wasn't part of the research team, said in an email. "Heat stroke is a potentially deadly form of heat illness that occurs when body temperatures rise to dangerous levels."

The study is based on mathematical probabilities instead of other climate research that looks at what happens at various carbon pollution levels. Because of that, University of Pennsylvania climate scientist Michael Mann is more skeptical of this research. It also doesn't take into account [landmark U.S. climate legislation](#) that President Joe Biden [signed earlier this month](#) or [new efforts by Australia](#), he said.

"The obstacles at this point are political and no statistical methods, regardless of how powerful or sophisticated can predict whether we will garner the political will to overcome them," Mann said in an email. "But there is reason for cautious optimism."

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HEADLINE	<b>08/25 Earliest harvest ever French wine country</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/drought-forces-earliest-harvest-french-wine-country-88881747">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/drought-forces-earliest-harvest-french-wine-country-88881747</a>
GIST	BORDEAUX, France -- The landscape in the prestigious vineyards of Bordeaux looks the same as ever, with healthy, ripe grapes hanging heavy off rows of green vines.

But this year something is starkly different in one of France's most celebrated wine regions and other parts of Europe. The harvest that once started in mid-September is now happening earlier than ever — in mid-August — as a result of severe drought and the wine industry's adaptation to the unpredictable effects of climate change.

Paradoxically, the season of heat waves and wildfires produced excellent grapes, despite lower yields. But achieving such a harvest required creative changes in growing techniques, including pruning vines in a different way and sometimes watering them in places where irrigation is usually banned. And producers across Europe who have seen first-hand the effects of global warming are worried about what more is to come.

So far, "global warming is very positive. We have better ripeness, better balance. ... But if you turn to the future, and if you increase the temperature by one degree more, plus, you will lose the freshness part in the balance of the wine," said Fabien Teitgen, technical director of Château Smith-Haut-Lafitte, an estate that grows organic wine grapes in Martillac, south of Bordeaux.

Grape growers adjusted their practices amid a series of heat waves, combined with lack of rain, that hit most of Europe. In the Bordeaux region, in southwestern France, giant wildfires destroyed large areas of pine forests. It did not rain from the end of June until mid-August.

As the harvest unfolds, dozens of workers kneel in the vineyards to hand-pick grapes and put them into baskets. The fruit is immediately crushed to make juice, which is put into tanks, then barrels to start the wine production process.

The harvest aims to produce the white wine from the famous Pessac-Léognan appellation. Red wine will soon follow.

Eric Perrin, one of the owners of the Château Carbonnieux estate, recalled that during his childhood, in the 1970s, harvests started around mid-September. This year, they began on Aug. 16.

But the 2022 vintage may be better than ever, Perrin said, because the grapes are healthy and well balanced. The hot, dry weather also prevented vines from getting diseases such as mildew.

Producing wine is a centuries-old tradition at Château Carbonnieux, where Thomas Jefferson visited the vineyards in 1787, before becoming president of the United States, and planted a pecan tree that still stands in a park.

Nowadays, Château Carbonnieux wine is sometimes offered by President Emmanuel Macron to esteemed hosts.

The drought changed the way wine producers work.

Before, vintners used to give vines a shape that allowed grapes to get the maximum amount of sun so they produced more sugar, which converts into alcohol. This year, growers tended to let leaves protect the grapes so the shadows would preserve the fruit's acidity and freshness, Teitgen explained.

Yields may be 15% to 20% lower in the broader region, mostly due to smaller grapes and the fact that some were burned by the sun in specific areas, Teitgen said, but it won't affect the wine's quality.

In front of the 14th-century tower of the Château Smith-Haut-Lafitte vineyard, Manon Lecouffe this week carefully watered newly planted vines, an indispensable job.

Vines that are several years old have deep roots that allow them to draw water from far underground and endure drought without suffering too much.

But this year, estates had authorization to water adult vines, a practice usually banned in Bordeaux.

“Some plots were heavily suffering with leaves falling,” Lecouffe said.

Another step vintners may take is to reduce the density of their plots to require less water or to work the soil to better conserve moisture deep down.

Experts are also considering whether planting new grape varieties could be helpful.

At Château Olivier, which also produces Pessac-Leognan wines, Director Laurent Lebrun showed how he and his team go through the vineyards to taste grapes plot by plot to decide where and when to harvest.

The consequences of global warming are now part of daily life for vintners, Lebrun said, noting the speed of the changes.

“We need to reprogram our own way of thinking,” he said. “There are many tools that are still within our reach, which are already used in warmer regions.”

Further south in Europe, harvests also started weeks earlier than normal to save shriveling and scorched grapes. Production is expected to be 10% to 20% lower in some regions of Italy, Spain and Portugal, though producers are hopeful of increased quality.

Italy's Coldiretti agricultural lobby stressed that the higher cost of energy and raw materials is expected to increase costs by 35%.

Scientists have long believed that human-caused climate change makes extreme weather more frequent. They say hotter air, warmer oceans and melting sea ice alter the jet stream, which makes storms, floods, heat waves, droughts and wildfires more destructive.

As warmer winters cause grape vines to produce early buds, French vintners worry that frost will disrupt the growing season more often. Violent hailstorms can destroy a year of work in a few minutes.

At Château Carbonnieux, Perrin fears some smaller producers may not withstand the changes.

“Climatic events since 2017 have led to smaller harvests. Not everyone will be able to survive it, for sure,” he said.

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HEADLINE	08/25 Still heatwaves even if climate goals met
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/US/frequent-heatwaves-expected-climate-goals-met-report/story?id=88753796">https://abcnews.go.com/US/frequent-heatwaves-expected-climate-goals-met-report/story?id=88753796</a>
GIST	<p>Despite efforts by major Western nations to combat climate change, the frequency of heat waves is expected to increase, according to a <a href="#">study released</a> Thursday.</p> <p>By 2100, over a billion people living in tropical and subtropical regions will annually experience temperatures that exceed dangerous heat index levels, the metric that measures heat exposure in human beings, according to the report in the Communications Earth &amp; Environment journal.</p> <p>The study found that people living in sub-Saharan Africa, India and the Arabian Peninsula will be exposed to dangerous heat index levels for most days of the year.</p> <p>According to the National Weather Service, anything between 103 degrees and 124 degrees Fahrenheit is considered part of the dangerous heat index, while indexes 125 degrees Fahrenheit or higher are considered extremely dangerous.</p> <p>Extreme heat can cause health issues, from fatigue to life-threatening problems such as heat strokes.</p>

The Paris Climate Agreement, the U.N.-sponsored accord to help slow the effects of climate change, has a goal to stop the global temperature from reaching 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, with a goal of 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. Even if the goal is met, it's still not enough to prevent areas of the tropics and subtropics from experiencing dangerous heat levels, according to the report.

"The climate science community, for quite a while, has understood that the Paris agreement's goal is going to be very difficult to achieve based on the warming that's already [happened]," Lucas Zeppetello, Ph.D., an earth science fellow at Harvard University and one of the authors of the study, told ABC News.

If countries manage to meet the goal, crossing the dangerous heat index threshold will be up to 10 times more common by 2100 in the U.S., Western Europe, China and Japan, while it could double in the tropics, resulting in more than one billion of people experiencing up to 124-degree temperatures by 2100, according to the study.

Tropical and sub-tropical areas will be affected the most due to their location, Zeppetello said. Zeppetello doesn't think humanity is past the point of no return, as measures can be taken to address the problem, but warned that things would get worse without action.

"The difference between the fifth percentile, which is a world where we get climate emissions under control, is just vastly different from a world in which we don't do that," he said.

According to the report, there's a 0.1% chance of limiting the global average temperature to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels by the end of the century, with the mean temperature headed toward 2 degrees Celsius by 2050.

"It's extremely frightening to think what would happen if 30 to 40 days a year were exceeding the extremely dangerous threshold," Zeppetello said in a statement. "These are frightening scenarios that we still have the capacity to prevent. This study shows you the abyss, but it also shows you that we have some agency to prevent these scenarios from happening."

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## Crime, Criminals

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HEADLINE	08/26 Sweltering Texas jails: no air-conditioners
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/26/us/texas-prisons-heat-air-conditioning.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/26/us/texas-prisons-heat-air-conditioning.html</a>
GIST	<p>EDINBURG, Texas — Rashes from heat are common. Metal furniture is hot to the touch. Hyperthermia and dehydration are a constant risk, mitigated with fans, tepid water and wet towels. Deaths, though rare, have occurred.</p> <p>This is life during much of the summer inside Texas' stifling prisons, a majority of which have no air-conditioning for inmates despite increasingly extreme temperatures in the state.</p> <p>For the men locked inside the dormitories of Lopez State Jail, dripping and desperate, a record-setting heat wave this summer created a feeling of misery bordering on hopelessness.</p> <p>"It feels like you're walking around in hell," said Gary Crawford, a 44-year-old inmate from Houston who wore a sleeveless undershirt in the dormitory he shares with dozens of other inmates on a day when the temperature in the jail had reached 91 degrees.</p> <p>On a recent weekday inside the minimum-security facility about 30 miles from the Mexico border, inmates draped yellow "cooling towels" around their necks and wiped away beads of sweat from their arms and faces.</p>

“Everybody is always on edge,” said David Guerra, 42, from San Antonio, who has been at Lopez for nearly a year.

Texas, one of at least 13 states without fully air-conditioned housing in its prison systems, has faced costly lawsuits and scathing criticism for failing to provide its inmates with relief from withering indoor temperatures at a time when lingering heat waves have become an ever-more-relentless feature of Texas summers.

The state is coming off its second hottest summer on record, with an average daily temperature of 97.4 degrees. The area around the Lopez State Jail in Edinburg experienced 48 days of 100 degrees or above, according to the state climatologist.

Since 2000, there have been at least 17 heat-related deaths in Texas prisons, including 10 during a heat wave in 2011, according to the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. The last documented prison death was in 2012. This year, 12 inmates and 21 employees have suffered heat-related illnesses, prison officials said, although some inmates’ family members and supporters said they believed the number of heat-related illnesses was higher.

Although the Texas prison system has undergone court-mandated reforms, new prisons have not received extra funding for air-conditioning, prison officials said. There has been little political momentum in the state’s conservative Legislature to spend tax dollars on air-conditioning for inmates.

However, the state does require some inmates to have air-conditioning: those housed in jails run by the counties, which often house inmates who are awaiting trial. The Texas Commission on Jail Standards, a state agency, requires that all county jails keep the temperature from 65 to 85 degrees. But that standard does not apply to state-run prisons.

As a result, only one out of every three prisons in Texas is fully air-conditioned.

The New York Times was granted access to the Lopez jail this month during a state lawmaker’s fact-finding tour, a rare look inside a system that normally is closed to visitors.

“We can do better,” State Representative Terry Canales, a Democrat whose district includes the Lopez jail. He toured the prison ahead of the next legislative session, with plans to introduce new legislation on prison air-conditioning. A bill he introduced in 2021 passed the Texas House of Representatives but died in the Senate; both chambers are controlled by Republicans.

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice, which oversees the state’s 98 correctional facilities and its roughly 120,000 inmates, has a plan to completely air-condition prisons by the end of the decade at a cost of \$1.1 billion. But it has yet to secure the funding from the Legislature.

Inside Lopez, there is air-conditioning in the hallways, but not in the dormitories that house inmates. Entering one from the cool hallway means confronting a withering blast of heat and humidity of the sort most people only experience climbing into a car parked in the sun on an extremely hot day.

During the visit, inmates were visibly sweating. Ismael Carrillo Gomez, a 32-year-old from San Antonio, displayed what he said was heat-related redness on his hands as he stood near his bunk without a shirt — a violation of the rules, though one that officials said was not enforced. (“If they need to take off their shirt, we’re not going to be writing disciplinary cases for that,” said Jason Clark, chief of staff of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.)

Industrial fans were placed on the floors and ceilings as part of the state’s “heat mitigation” strategy, but inmates, who sleep on bunk beds and mingle in an open area with benches and tables, complained the fans only recirculated hot air. Lights in the dormitory were intermittently turned off during the day, an apparent attempt to reduce heat.

	<p>Inmates can request to be taken to “respite” areas in air-conditioned sections of the prison, and officials said they had access to ice and water. How often such requests for respite are granted was not immediately clear, but Texas Prisons Community Advocates, an inmate support group, said it had reports of inmates who asked to go to respite but were not allowed.</p> <p>The men described the heat and humidity as a constant drain on their psyche, emotions and outlook, making them irritable and moody and raising the prospect for fights. A good night’s sleep is a rarity, they said. Some preferred to sleep on the floor where it was cooler.</p> <p>“Nobody is going to say there was a fight because you got frustrated because of the heat,” said Mr. Guerra. “It’s always going to be another issue that led to it. But the heat provokes it.”</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/25 Mexico: 150 cops in state on cartel payroll</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.vice.com/en/article/dy7yxm/150-cops-were-on-a-cartel-payroll-in-one-of-mexicos-most-violent-states">https://www.vice.com/en/article/dy7yxm/150-cops-were-on-a-cartel-payroll-in-one-of-mexicos-most-violent-states</a>
GIST	<p>A secret, elite Mexican taskforce discovered more than 150 corrupt police officers working under two payrolls: the government’s and the New Generation Jalisco Cartel’s.</p> <p>The taskforce in the Mexican central state of Guanajuato was staffed by former Mexican federal police officers trained in the U.S., Colombia and México to tackle crimes such as cyber-terrorism, drug trafficking and counter-intelligence, <a href="#">according to the Guanajuato authorities</a>.</p> <p>The secret operation started over a year ago after state government officials started noticing that municipal policemen were leaking information to criminals so they could elude arrest, a source inside the taskforce told <a href="#">Mexican news outlet Milenio</a>.</p> <p>“They were criminals with uniforms,” Guanajuato state Security Secretary Sophia Huett said in a press conference this week. “These people disguised themselves as police officers and now they will get fired and will go to jail.”</p> <p>Guanajuato’s governor, <a href="#">Diego Sinhue Rodríguez Vallejo</a>, said about the corrupt officers: “They not only are leaking information to criminals, but also they don’t attend to the citizens’ call for help.”</p> <p>Last week two local police officers <a href="#">were murdered</a> by alleged members of a cartel while on duty. During the first half of 2022 at least 25 policemen have been killed in Guanajuato, <a href="#">according to official figures</a>. Guanajuato has been at the top of Mexico’s most violent states for the last five months, with <a href="#">over 10 murders a day</a>.</p> <p>The son of Celaya’s city mayor in the Mexican central state of Guanajuato <a href="#">was murdered by sicarios</a> while parked outside a convenience store earlier this month. A few hours after the attack, alleged members of a drug cartel circulated a message on social media that claimed the assassination was due to the mayor breaking supposed promises, and threatened to kill more family members. The message was posted anonymously without any specific criminal organization attributing the attack.</p> <p>Guanajuato and the neighboring state of Jalisco were <a href="#">recently under siege</a> for several hours after Mexico’s military attempted to arrest prominent Jalisco New Generation Cartel commander Ricardo Ruiz aka “Doble R”.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/25 Juvenile detention center downplayed riot?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://mynorthwest.com/3608158/rantz-911-calls-reveal-panicked-staff-during-juvenile-riot-as-state-downplays-incident/">https://mynorthwest.com/3608158/rantz-911-calls-reveal-panicked-staff-during-juvenile-riot-as-state-downplays-incident/</a>



A series of 911 calls obtained by the Jason Rantz Show on KTTH reveal the Department of Children, Youth and Family Service (DCYF) dramatically downplayed a riot at a juvenile detention center it operates.

Five juveniles at Echo Glen Children's Center in Snoqualmie were responsible for the chaos. They tried to climb the fence surrounding the facility to escape and, at one point, staff thought one of the juveniles was "AWOL." It was so bad that at one point, riot gear was suggested, according to 911 calls.

DCYF, however, did not call this a riot, nor did it acknowledge that juveniles attempted to escape.

Though a spokesperson acknowledged the juveniles "engaged in threats" and detailed some damage to facility property, the riot was merely labeled a "situation" stemming from juveniles who "refused to return to their rooms for evening bedtime according to current rules for the facility."

### **Panicked 911 calls**

An Echo Glen staffer called 911 in a panic on Saturday, August 20th, at 9:12 p.m.

"I'm reporting a riot at Echo Glenn Children's Center. We need law enforcement back up immediately," she said. "... I am requesting for security. They asked us to call 911."

While speaking to the 911 operator, the staffer was also trying to coordinate with colleagues.

"I have to go. They need immediate assistance," she said.

Before she hung up, she explained that, "we believe one of our kids has gone AWOL." She did not have many details and disconnected to help handle the riot.

'We don't have any riot gear'

At 9:20 p.m., the King County Sheriff's Office (KCSO) called Echo Glen to report deputies were outside and needed to be let in.

"Are they still actively rioting?" the operator asked.

"Yes ... we have youths that are in our exterior courtyard ... and they are currently rioting and trying to, attempting to escape the back courtyard. And they are breaking exterior glass and trying to throw the glass at the staff. And then we have five that are in the unit that are down who are also banging out," the staff member explained.

She went on to say the juveniles in the courtyard were "attempting to climb the fence and get out."

At one point, there was a question if a K-9 unit was needed. But what the staff member thought they might need was riot gear.

"Okay, it sounds like we actually might need additional backup," she tells the Sheriff's Office. "When I went out to talk to the police, they said they don't have any riot gear. When I asked him to assist. They're like, 'well, we don't have any riot gear.'"

According to the 911 calls, Issaquah Police were called on the scene in addition to the sheriff's deputies. A Washington State Patrol spokesperson confirmed it was on site as well.

### **DCYF downplayed riot**

The most important details from the dramatic recordings were left out of the DCYF statement.

"On Saturday evening at around 9 p.m., five residents at the Chinook building, a 16-person unit at Echo Glen Children's Center, refused to return to their rooms for evening bedtime according to current rules for the facility.

When staff gave a directive to return to their rooms, residents engaged in threats and caused damage to the facility, including breaking windows, furniture, and other items. Staff attempted de-escalation techniques, but were unsuccessful.

Damage to the Chinook building is still being assessed. Damage is concentrated in and around the Chinook building. Injuries reported during the incident were minor and consisted of scratches, none requiring external medical attention.

The situation required the support of local law enforcement and state patrol, and was contained that evening. No youth escaped, and all youth were accounted for soon after the incident was resolved.”

Spokesperson Jason Wettstein defended his statement to the Jason Rantz Show on KTTH.

“It was a serious situation, as I noted, with threats to staff and damage to the facility. The incident involved five residents from one building that was contained in a relatively short time frame with help from local law enforcement,” Wettstein emailed.

Wettstein would not explain why he did not use the term riot or note the attempts to escape. He did not explain when asked why staff said 10 juveniles rioted, but DCYF cites five.

### **King County Sheriff’s Office drags feet**

There are obviously some missing details. And a Public Disclosure Program Manager with the county says there are other calls that are not yet ready for distribution.

Was a juvenile actually AWOL? Did any juveniles make it over the fence and get caught? For how long, exactly, did the riot take place? The King County Sheriff’s Office could help fill in some details, but it refuses.

The KCSO, which is the investigating agency, continues to drag its feet in releasing any parts of the incident report narrative, citing concern over the privacy of minors and that information could jeopardize the open investigation. They anticipate releasing some materials next week.

Pierce County Sheriff’s Office is subject to the same privacy concerns as King County. But it only took them a few days to release an incident narrative concerning a 12-year-old they say was armed and found behind the wheel of a stolen vehicle. It even released body-cam footage of the incident.

How is an agency considerably smaller than the KCSO able to release information so quickly?

### **This is a matter of public interest**

Echo Glen has seen its share of controversies this year.

In January, a group of five dangerous inmates were able to [escape](#), prompting an urgent law enforcement response to find them. It took weeks to apprehend them. In April, [another juvenile inmate escaped](#) the facility.

There have been concerns over a lack of staffing and resources at Echo Glen [since at least 2018](#). Now, we have a riot where up to five inmates attempted to escape? This is a matter of public interest that deserves immediate transparency. It’s about public and staff safety.

The KCSO won’t even provide a statement on the incident, instead leaving it up to the very department facing criticism for how it handles the facility to decide how to frame the story.

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SOURCE	<a href="https://www.krem.com/article/news/crime/dutch-jake-park-spokane-shooting/293-3c04f670-9166-49b8-8756-c766420a4205">https://www.krem.com/article/news/crime/dutch-jake-park-spokane-shooting/293-3c04f670-9166-49b8-8756-c766420a4205</a>
GIST	<p>SPOKANE, Wash. — Three teens and one adult were injured in an early morning shooting at a West Central Spokane park on Thursday. Spokane police is continuing to investigate into the afternoon.</p> <p>Just before 3 a.m. on Thursday, Spokane Police Department (SPD) patrol officers responded to Dutch Jake Park following reports of a shooting. Officers found one person who was shot and provided medical aid to that person until EMS arrived.</p> <p>Three other people arrived at local hospitals shortly after and all were suffering from gunshot wounds, according to police.</p> <p>Police said initial information shows a large group of people was at the park at the time of the shooting. None of the injuries appear to be life-threatening.</p> <p>Three of the people injured were teenagers and one was a 40-year-old, according to police. It is not known who was located at the park and who arrived at the hospital later in the morning.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/25 Ex-sheriff guilty plea: son's DUI cover up</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.krem.com/article/news/crime/lincoln-county-sheriff-dui-cover-up/293-414ac1c9-a140-41d6-9fd2-c9852435ca26">https://www.krem.com/article/news/crime/lincoln-county-sheriff-dui-cover-up/293-414ac1c9-a140-41d6-9fd2-c9852435ca26</a>
GIST	<p>LINCOLN COUNTY, Wash. — Former Lincoln County Sheriff Wade Magers pleaded guilty on Wednesday to charges relating to his role in trying to cover up his son's alleged drinking and driving incident from last year.</p> <p>Mager's son was involved in a vehicle rollover near the Creston intersection at approximately 10 p.m. on Feb. 11, 2021. Immediately after the crash, court documents state Magers contacted his brother, who picked him up from the crash scene. He then contacted his girlfriend and told her he was on his way to his parent's house.</p> <p>Magers' son's girlfriend and her friend then drove from their house to his house. At approximately 1:42 a.m. the following day, Magers' son called Lincoln County dispatch to report the crash and told deputies he would remove the car later that day.</p> <p>According to documents, he reportedly told dispatch that he swerved to miss a deer and ran off the road.</p> <p>Deputies went to the scene of the crash on Feb. 12, 2021. One deputy walked around the scene and noticed the tire marks and path of the car were not consistent with a swerving vehicle. Deputies did not see or smell anything indicating alcohol was involved in the crash.</p> <p>At 2:30 a.m. the following day, deputies called Magers to see if he knew where his son was. Magers told deputies he believed his son went to a hospital in Davenport or Grand Coulee to seek treatment.</p> <p>The deputy who responded to the scene attempted to contact Magers' son that same day but could not do so until Feb. 13, 2021. During their conversation, Magers' son admitted that he didn't swerve to avoid hitting a deer but was reaching for his phone when he drove off the road. He told the deputy that he was speeding but denied using drugs or alcohol, resulting in him getting a citation for speeding.</p> <p>That same day, Magers' son's girlfriend contacted LCSO and made two allegations: Magers told her and his son to tell police that he swerved to hit a deer and that Magers and his wife refused to let their son seek medical attention until his blood alcohol content (BAC) was zero.</p> <p>It is important to note that Magers' son is above the legal drinking age and has never been formally charged with driving under the influence in relation to this crash.</p>

Magers' son's girlfriend told deputies that she believed Magers' son might have had internal injuries from the crash that he was prevented from getting checked out. She told deputies, "If anyone asks, I did not know about this and I was never here."

The Grant County Sheriff's Office (GCSO) was contacted by LCSO Undersheriff Kelly Watkins on Feb. 17, 2021, and "requested to conduct an administrative investigation into the allegations" made by Magers' son's girlfriend. A Grant County detective began the investigation by conducting interviews with Magers' son, his girlfriend and one of their friends. Those interviews "provided insight into the strained relationship" between Magers and his son, according to documents.

The deputy later contacted Magers to ask if he would provide a statement regarding the incident, which he declined to do. At the end of the investigation, the deputy concluded Magers could potentially be charged with obstructing a law enforcement officer, making a false or misleading statement to a public servant and third-degree rendering criminal assistance.

In April 2021, Magers' son was contacted by deputies once again. He told deputies that the crash left him with four broken ribs, a compression fracture of one of his lower vertebrae, a pinhole puncture in his left lung and bruising from his left hip to his knee. He said he never felt anything related to his back injury and that doctors said the damage was in an area that would not affect his spine.

During that same interview, Magers' son told deputies that he was not honest about the cause of the crash because he worried about his and his father's jobs. He then admitted that he consumed at least eight 16-ounce beers before driving and that drinking and driving too fast was the leading cause of the crash.

Magers' son went on to tell deputies that on the night of the crash, his parents asked him if he wanted to go to the hospital but did not go out of their way to get him there. The day after the crash, Magers asked his son again if he wanted to go to the hospital and he said yes. Magers then said, "Alright, well, let's get you cleaned up and, you know, make sure that you're okay here." His son told detectives that was his father's way of saying, "Let's sober you up."

When asked if Magers prevented him from going to the hospital, his son told detectives he believed his father did because he was not coherent enough to know the severity of his injuries and that his father should have taken him to the hospital regardless.

One of Magers' son's friends told detectives she heard someone tell Magers that his son needed to go to the hospital and Magers said no.

The case file was submitted for peer review and supervisory approval before being sent to the Franklin County Prosecutor for review on May 10, 2021.

Magers retired from his role as sheriff in June 2022. He began his career with the Lincoln County Sheriff's Office (LCSO) when he was hired as a patrol deputy in 1990. He also served as a marine enforcement deputy and firearms instructor before being promoted to undersheriff in 1999.

He was one of the longest-serving sheriffs in the state of Washington and the longest-serving law enforcement officer in Lincoln County history.

Magers pleaded guilty on Wednesday to one count of rendering criminal assistance in the third degree. He was sentenced to 40 hours of community service, which he has one year to complete.

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HEADLINE	08/25 Grant Co. child sex sting nets 7 arrests
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.krem.com/article/news/crime/child-exploitation-grant-county-operation-net-nanny/293-b33ece80-9909-434e-9511-0c8a75c14abc">https://www.krem.com/article/news/crime/child-exploitation-grant-county-operation-net-nanny/293-b33ece80-9909-434e-9511-0c8a75c14abc</a>

GIST	<p>GRANT COUNTY, Wash. — Seven men were arrested in Grant County over the course of several days for accusations of sexual misconduct against minors. No children were put in harm's way of the accused men. All communication with the suspects was conducted by authorities.</p> <p>Potential charges for the seven men include communication with a minor for immoral purposes, sexual exploitation of a minor, or rape of a child in the second degree.</p> <p>Coined “Operation Net Nanny”, the project started in 2016 and is led by the Washington State Patrol, in collaboration with local Grant county law enforcement agencies and several more partner agencies.</p> <p>In a press release, Grant County Prosecutor Kevin McCrae said, “Individuals who abuse and steal the innocence of children, in person or online, are some of the most heinous and despicable crimes we deal with. The Grant County Prosecutor’s Office will continue to support these operations to ensure the safety of children in our community.”</p> <p>According to an article by the <a href="#">New York Times</a>, "Operation Net Nanny" involves law enforcement posing as children online. There, when a suspect messages an account from law enforcement asking for sex or sexual actions, law enforcement will then operate to arrest the individual.</p> <p>This is the 19th operation conducted of “Operation Net Nanny”. Started by the WSP and the WSP’s Missing and Exploited Children Task Force (MECTF) back in 2015, MSCTF and WSP’s “Operation Net Nanny” totaled 301 arrests and has rescued 31 children across the state.</p> <p>"While the internet is a powerful tool for us all, criminals using it to target our communities’ necessitates a need for this type of proactive investigations by our law enforcement troopers and partners in order to combat these horrible crimes,” WSP Chief John R. Batiste said in a press release. “This operation is aimed at protecting our vulnerable children and making our communities safer.”</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/25 Seattle firefighters attacked tending patient</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://komonews.com/news/local/seattle-firefighters-attacked-while-tending-to-patient-on-capitol-hill">https://komonews.com/news/local/seattle-firefighters-attacked-while-tending-to-patient-on-capitol-hill</a>
GIST	<p>SEATTLE — No break in the violence directed against firefighters with the latest attack coming Thursday afternoon on Capitol Hill.</p> <p>A Seattle firefighter crew was treating a patient during a medical call when they said a bystander tried to intentionally slam into them with his motorized wheelchair. This incident follows months of similar assaults against firefighters and calls for action are mounting.</p> <p>More than half a dozen officers raced to the corner of Broadway and E Denny Ave. when a “help the firefighter” call went out over the radio. The firefighters were tending a patient on the street when they said they were attacked and it was serious enough that they called for police back-up.</p> <p>“It's an absolute shame. I think that firefighters should be able to do their work in peace and not be assaulted,” said Michael Cole, who witnessed the arrest. “Any assault against a firefighter is an assault against all of us.”</p> <p>The suspect is a double amputee and was combative and belligerent as police questioned him. At one point officers put a spit sock over the man’s head and handcuffed him to his wheelchair but the man shook the arms of the chair loose and the struggle continued. Eventually police requested an ambulance with a gurney to take the man into custody.</p> <p>“Why would people do this to our own firefighters,” said Emily Schneider, who also witnessed the arrest.</p> <p>This violence is just the latest in a series of threats and assaults directed at Seattle firefighters. Kenny Stuart, the firefighters' union president, sent letters to city leaders detailing 40 attacks in just more than four months. All of them happened while crews were responding to calls.</p>

	<p>“That's an incredible figure. It's appalling," said Julie Poliak, who lives on Capitol Hill.</p> <p>The union president is calling on city leaders to intervene, a demand embraced by others in the community.</p> <p>“They need to step in and do what they need to do to protect the people who are here to protect us," said Josiah Phelps, who lives in Seattle.</p> <p>The two firefighters who the man allegedly tried to ram showed up at the arrest scene to verify police had the correct suspect. Neither firefighter appeared to have any significant injuries.</p> <p>The office of Mayor Bruce Harrell sent KOMO News a statement about the ongoing violence firefighters have encountered.</p> <p><i>“We know that public safety isn’t limited to police responses. The Seattle Fire Department works in every corner of the city – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. The unprecedented toll of the work they have done to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic has been compounded by increased threats and acts of violence faced while providing services to those experiencing homelessness. I applaud their continued commitment to our collective safety, and am committed to working with the Council, SFD, and IAFF 27 to ensure that they are safe on the job and across the city,”</i> the mayor wrote.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/25 WA owes murder suspect \$27K; \$250 a day</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/washington-state-owes-light-rail-attack-murder-suspect-27000-with-more-added-everyday/WPIMMVEJX5EY7LIUUSJ25K7DKY/">https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/washington-state-owes-light-rail-attack-murder-suspect-27000-with-more-added-everyday/WPIMMVEJX5EY7LIUUSJ25K7DKY/</a>
GIST	<p>In April, the man charged in the random attack of a woman in a Seattle light rail station and the murder of a Capitol Hill man was awarded \$250 a day after the state was unable to provide court-ordered mental health treatment.</p> <p>Alexander Jay was ordered to receive “competency restoration” services on April 15 after he was found incompetent to stand trial.</p> <p>According to court documents, Jay was ordered to receive treatment and resources from the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services.</p> <p>Jay was initially considered for treatment. However, the department determined that his admission to a facility was not appropriate due to the violent nature of the case. As a result, the defense argued to dismiss the case, saying Jay’s due process rights were being violated because of the state’s delay to in providing him with mental health resources. King County argued that dismissal was not appropriate for this case.</p> <p>According to court documents, the court found that Jay’s due process rights were violated, but his motion to dismiss the case was denied.</p> <p>The State of Department of Social and Health Services was then ordered to pay Jay \$250 a day until he is admitted for restoration treatment, with the sanctions beginning on May 9.</p> <p>In June, the department referred Jay to Western State Hospital in Lakewood, initially setting an estimated admission date between Aug. 15-19, 2022. That admission did not occur and, as of Aug. 25, Jay is still in custody in King County jail, bringing the total payments from Washington state to \$27,000.</p> <p>According to Tyler Hemstreet at the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, it’s now estimated that Jay will be admitted to Western State “on or before” Oct. 2. By that date, Jay will be owed \$36,500.</p>



	<p>Jay, 40, was charged with second-degree assault in the unprovoked and random attack of a woman at a Seattle rail station.</p> <p>According to court documents, on March 2, a woman got off the light rail at the Chinatown-International District station in Seattle and walked up the stairs to exit the light rail tunnel.</p> <p>At the top of the concrete stairs, Jay allegedly grabbed the woman and threw her down.</p> <p>As she fell, she was followed down the stairs, where he was said to have grabbed her again and threw her further down the stairs.</p> <p>The woman grabbed onto the stair railing to prevent being thrown further down the stairs again.</p> <p>As Jay walked back up the stairs and left the station, a security guard came to the woman's aid.</p> <p>The attack was captured on the station's security cameras.</p> <p>The woman suffered three broken ribs and a broken clavicle in the attack.</p> <p>Jay was also charged in the March 3 fatal attack of a man in the 1800 block of East Olive Way.</p> <p>According to charging documents, Jay attacked the man from behind by bludgeoning him to death with a heavy piece of rebar.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/25 Juvenile facility escapee now rape suspect</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/juvenile-facility-escapee-accused-raping-16-year-old-9-days-before-suspected-west-seattle-attack/BQU6HL3YRGNXCR5AYJVJQTTE/">https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/juvenile-facility-escapee-accused-raping-16-year-old-9-days-before-suspected-west-seattle-attack/BQU6HL3YRGNXCR5AYJVJQTTE/</a>
GIST	<p>SEATTLE — An 18-year-old man accused of sexually assaulting a woman in <a href="#">Seattle's Delridge neighborhood</a> last week has also been charged with raping a 16-year-old girl nine days earlier.</p> <p>Prosecutors say a month and a half after Javyantre C. Sin escaped from a Ephrata group home in June, he robbed and sexually assaulted two young women within nine days.</p> <p>The first incident happened on Aug. 6 on the rooftop parking lot for the AMC Theatre at Southcenter Mall in Tukwila.</p> <p>Charging documents said the 16-year-old victim was reading a book when Sin raped and robbed her at gunpoint.</p> <p>In that case, Sin is charged with first-degree rape and robbery.</p> <p>Nine days later on Aug. 15, a 25-year-old woman was walking home from work in West Seattle when Sin grabbed her from behind and dragged her into a wooded area where she was beaten and raped, according to prosecutors. KIRO 7 spoke with the woman's sister, who did not want to be identified for safety reasons. She said her family is devastated by this attack.</p> <p>"You come to this country to be safe, to be successful," she said. "You never expect this kind of thing to ... happen to your sister."</p> <p>The woman had to be hospitalized for her extensive injuries.</p> <p>The victim's sister described visiting her in the hospital as "heartbreaking," saying that it was difficult to even recognize her sibling.</p>

	<p>“Her face was different. Everything was different because of this attack,” she said.</p> <p>In that case, Sin is charged with indecent liberties and first-degree robbery.</p> <p><u><a href="#">Sin was arrested on Aug. 20.</a></u></p> <p>After a series of robberies and other crimes in Washington and Oregon while Sin was a juvenile, he was ordered to remain committed to Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration until he was 19.5 years old, with a release date of Nov. 13, 2023.</p> <p>Sin, who was most recently staying in a group home in Ephrata, ran out the door on June 21 with two other residents, got into a car, and fled.</p> <p>He has had at least five prior warrants in addition to an active escape warrant from Green Hill School, a juvenile detention facility in Chehalis.</p> <p>The King County Prosecutor’s Office said they were not notified that Sin had escaped.</p> <p>“The question on why he’s out should really go to the state because that’s a question the prosecutors have, too,” Casey McNerthy with the prosecutor’s office said. “We didn’t know that he was out because the state never contacted us until we found out about this new crime.”</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/25 Australia police seizure record 2tons meth</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/australian-police-seize-record-tons-methamphetamine-88878374">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/australian-police-seize-record-tons-methamphetamine-88878374</a>
GIST	<p>SYDNEY -- Authorities have found 1.8 metric tons (2 U.S. tons) of methamphetamine hidden in marble tiles shipped from the Middle East to Sydney in what police describe as the largest-ever seizure of the illicit drug in Australia.</p> <p>Three men were arrested after 748 kilograms (1,649 pounds) of the drug were found early this month hidden in 24 containers that arrived at Port Botany, officials said on Friday.</p> <p>Another 1,060 kilograms (2,337 pounds) of meth were found in 19 containers that arrived at the same port last week. The drugs were hidden in the same method and were all shipped from the United Arab Emirates.</p> <p>Police estimate the meth’s street value at 1.6 billion Australian dollars (\$1.1 billion), which reflects the higher prices that Australians pay for illicit drugs than users do in many comparable countries.</p> <p>Police Detective Chief Supt. John Watson described the quantity of meth as “staggering.”</p> <p>“This seizure will be felt for weeks to come by many high-, mid- and lower-level suppliers,” Watson said.</p> <p>No further arrests have been made since last week’s seizure. Investigators have turned their attention to identifying the overseas suppliers.</p> <p>“The Middle Eastern region is probably our main focus,” Watson said. “But I certainly wouldn’t restrict our investigation to just that region.”</p> <p>All the containers were destined to be sent to a factory in western Sydney that had been set up to quickly extract meth from marble, Watson said. Police do not know how often the factory had been used.</p>

	<p>The three men already arrested — aged 24, 26 and 34 — face potential life sentences in prison if convicted of drug trafficking. They have appeared in court and have been refused bail.</p> <p>Australia's previous record meth haul was 1.6 metric tons (1.8 U.S. tons) hidden in speakers and shipped into Melbourne from Bangkok in April 2019. Three Melbourne residents were charged with drug offenses.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/25 Black pastor arrested watering flowers</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/US/black-pastor-arrested-watering-flowers-speaks-newly-released/story?id=88814137">https://abcnews.go.com/US/black-pastor-arrested-watering-flowers-speaks-newly-released/story?id=88814137</a>
GIST	<p>A Black pastor who was arrested in May after a neighbor reported a "suspicious person" in a yard watering flowers, said he is considering filing a racial discrimination lawsuit against his local police department.</p> <p>After returning from his church's Sunday service, Pastor Michael Jennings of Childersburg, Alabama, said he was doing a neighborly deed -- watering his out-of-town neighbor's flowers on May 22, 2022 at their request -- when a woman down the street called police to report a suspicious person and car.</p> <p>The neighbor who called 911 said she did not recognize Jennings at first, according to body camera footage released this week.</p> <p>When responding to the call, police asked Jennings for an I.D., the video depicts.</p> <p>After he refused, claiming he wasn't committing a crime, police arrested and charged Jennings for obstruction of governmental operations.</p> <p>In the body camera footage, Jennings, who is Black, accuses the officers of racially profiling him, which they deny in the video.</p> <p>Jennings told ABC News he was confused and "agitated" but feared resisting arrest would have life-threatening consequences.</p> <p>"I was trying to cooperate even though I didn't understand what was going on," he told ABC News. "I was angry, but I knew to comply."</p> <p>Phyllis Jennings, the pastor's wife, ran from their home to the scene after her husband was arrested, bringing his wallet and identification.</p> <p>"I was so horrified. I thought for sure he had been shot, God forbid dead," she told ABC News. "Watering flowers constitutes this?"</p> <p>The body camera footage depicts the same neighbor who originally reported Jennings to the police arriving at the scene to clear up the situation. She can be heard telling the officers, "He lives right next door and he would be watering their flowers. This is probably my fault."</p> <p>Harry Daniels, the pastor's attorney, said he and his co-counsel plan to file a federal discrimination lawsuit against the Childersburg Police Department on Jennings' behalf.</p> <p>"The law is very clear that Pastor Jennings was not doing anything wrong," Daniels said. "In fact, he was doing everything right. He was being a good neighbor."</p> <p>In Alabama, like many other states, people are not obligated to show an officer an ID if they don't suspect them of committing a crime.</p>

	<p>"The neighbor, a white woman, they asked her, 'Do he have a right to be there?' She said, 'Yes, I believe so,'" Daniels added. "And they took her word as gospel truth. But the pastor who preached the gospel every Sunday, they didn't take his word at all."</p> <p>Childersburg Police Department Interim Chief of Police Kevin Koss told ABC News, "there is no comment" that he can provide at this time "due to pending litigation."</p> <p>The charges against Jennings were ultimately dropped, but he said the traumatic memories still linger.</p> <p>During his arrest, Jennings said he was reminded of a pair of antique handcuffs from the 1800s in his personal collection of Black history memorabilia.</p> <p>"This thing came to my mind, that to be shackled and to have your freedom taken away from you, it's something else. It's dehumanizing," he said. "It's something that gives you nightmares."</p> <p>Jennings said he is leaning on his faith as he recovers from the emotional toll the arrest has taken on his family.</p> <p>"My faith helped me a lot because I knew that God would work the situation out," he said. "You have to forgive people because you can't judge people and hold things against people."</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/25 KY homeless shelter shooting: 2 dead</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/US/dead-multiple-injured-shooting-kentucky-homeless-shelter/story?id=88875336">https://abcnews.go.com/US/dead-multiple-injured-shooting-kentucky-homeless-shelter/story?id=88875336</a>
GIST	<p>Two people have been killed and multiple others injured in a shooting at a Kentucky homeless shelter for men Thursday night, police said.</p> <p>The Henderson Police Department responded to an active shooter incident at Harbor House Christian Center, authorities <a href="#">said</a>.</p> <p>Kenneth B. Gibbs of Henderson has been identified as the suspect and was taken into custody at 9:55 p.m., police said.</p> <p>ABC News affiliate <a href="#">WEHT reported</a> that the coroner said two people were found fatally shot inside the building and two were taken to the hospital for medical treatment.</p> <p>Harbor House, where the incident took place, is a Christian-based organization that is "a safe harbor for men in need," and "dedicated to bringing men up in the community," according to its Facebook page.</p>
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